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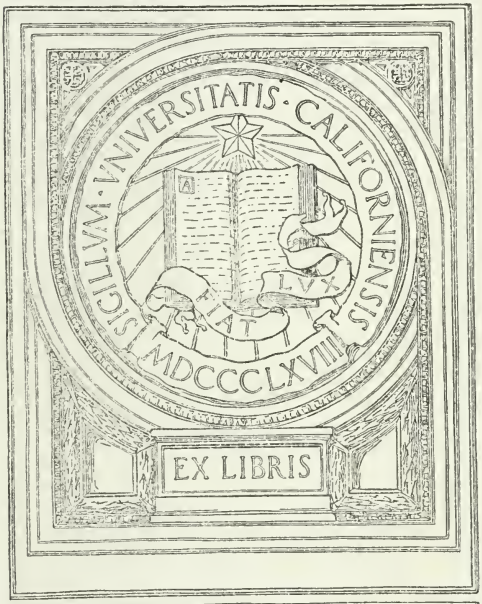

Ellen L. Gray
Dec 28, 1898

Duc de Saint-Simon.

THE

WITS AND BEAUX OF SOCIETY.

BY

GRACE AND PHILIP WHARTON,

AUTHORS OF "THE QUEENS OF SOCIETY."

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOL. II.

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THE

WITS AND BEAUX OF SOCIETY.

FRANÇOIS, DUC DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULT AND THE DUC DE SAINT-SIMON.

THE precursor of Saint-Simon, the model of Lord Chesterfield, this ornament of his age, belonged, as well as Saint-Simon, to that state of society in France which was characterized—as Lord John Russell, in his "Memoirs of the Duchess of Orleans," tells us—by an idolatry of power and station. "God would not condemn a person of that rank," was the exclamation of a lady of the old *régime* on hearing that a notorious sinner, "Pair de France," and one knows not what else, had gone to his account impenitent and unabsolved; and though the sentiment may strike us as profane, it was, doubtless, genuine.

Rank, however was often adorned by accomplishments which, like an exemption from rules of conduct, it almost claimed as a privilege. Good-breeding was a science in France; natural to a peasant, even, it was studied as an epitome of all the social virtues. "*N'être pas poli*" was the sum total of all dispraise: a man could only recover from it by splendid valor or rare

gifts; a woman could not hope to rise out of that Slough of Despond to which good-breeding never came. We were behind all the arts of civilization in England, as François de Rochefoucault (we give the orthography of the present day) was in his cradle. This brilliant personage, who combined the wit and the moralist, the courtier and the soldier, the man of literary tastes and the sentimentalist *par excellence*, was born in 1613. In addition to his hereditary title of duc, he had the empty honor, as Saint-Simon calls it, of being Prince de Marsillac, a designation which was lost in that of *De la Rochefoucault*—so famous even to the present day. As he presented himself at the court of the regency, over which Anne of Austria nominally presided, no youth there was more distinguished for his elegance or for the fame of his exploits during the wars of the Fronde than this youthful scion of an illustrious house. Endowed by nature with a pleasing countenance, and, what was far more important in that fastidious region, an air of dignity, he displayed wonderful contradictions in his character and bearing. He had, says Madame de Maintenon, "*beaucoup d'esprit, et peu de savoir;*" an expressive phrase. "He was," she adds, "pliant in nature, intriguing, and cautious;" nevertheless she never, she declares, possessed a more steady friend, nor one more confiding and better adapted to advise. Brave as he was, he held personal valor, or affected to do so, in light estimation. His ambition was to rule others. Lively in conversation, though

naturally pensive, he assembled around him all that Paris or Versailles could present of wit and intellect.

The old Hôtel de Rochefoucault, in the Rue de Seine, in the Faubourg St. Germain, in Paris, still grandly recalls the assemblies in which Racine, Boileau, Madame de Sévigné, the La Fayettes, and the famous Duchess de Longueville, used to assemble. The time-honored family of De la Rochefoucault still preside there; though one of its fairest ornaments, the young, lovely, and pious Duchesse de la Rochefoucault of our time, died in 1852—one of the first known victims to diphtheria in France, in that unchanged old locality. There, where the De Longuevilles, the Mazarins, and those who had formed the famous council of state of Anne of Austria had disappeared, the poets and wits who gave to the age of Louis XIV. its true brilliancy, collected around the Duc de la Rochefoucault. What a scene it must have been in those days, as Buffon said of the earth in spring, "*tout four-mille de vie!*" Let us people the salon of the Hôtel de Rochefoucault with visions of the past; see the host there, in his chair, a martyr to the gout, which he bore with all the cheerfulness of a Frenchman, and picture to ourselves the great men who were handing him his cushion or standing near his *fauteuil*.

Racine's joyous face may be imagined as he comes in fresh from the College of Harcourt. Since he was born in 1639, he had not arrived at his zenith till La

Rochefoucault was almost past his prime. For a man at thirty-six in France can no longer talk prospectively of the departure of youth; it is gone. A single man of thirty, even in Paris, is "*un vieux garçon:*" life begins too soon and ends too soon with those pleasant sinners, the French. And Racine, when he was first routed out of Port Royal, where he was educated, and presented to the whole Faubourg St. Germain, beheld his patron, La Rochefoucault, in the position of a disappointed man. An early adventure of his youth had humbled, perhaps, the host of the Hôtel de Rochefoucault. At the battle of St. Antoine, where he had distinguished himself, a musket-ball had nearly deprived him of sight. On this occasion he had quoted these lines, taken from the tragedy of "*Alcyonnée.*" It must, however, be premised that the famous Duchess de Longueville had urged him to engage in the wars of the Fronde. To her these lines were addressed:—

"Pour mériter son cœur, pour plaire à ses beaux yeux,
J'ai fait la guerre aux Rois, je l'aurais faite aux dieux."

But now he had broken off his intimacy with the duchesse, and he therefore parodied these lines:—

"Pour ce cœur inconstant, qu'enfin je connais mieux,
J'ai fait la guerre aux Rois, j'en ai perdue les yeux."

Nevertheless, La Rochefoucault was still the gay, charming, witty host and courtier. Racine composed, in 1660, his "*Nymphe de Seine,*" in honor of the

marriage of Louis XIV., and was then brought into notice of those whose notice was no empty compliment, such as, in our day, illustrious dukes pay to more illustrious authors, by asking them to be jumbled in a crowd at a time when the rooks are beginning to caw. We catch, as they may, the shadow of a dissolving water-ice, or see the exit of an unattainable tray of negus. No; in the days of Racine, as in those of Halifax and Swift in England, solid fruits grew out of fulsome praise; and Colbert, then minister, settled a pension of six hundred livres, as francs were called in those days (twenty-four pounds), on the poet. And with this the former pupil of Port Royal was fain to be content. Still he was so poor that he *almost* went into the church, an uncle offering to resign him a priory of his order if he would become a regular. He was a candidate for orders, and wore a sacerdotal dress when he wrote the tragedy of "Theagenes," and that of the "Frères Ennemis," the subject of which was given him by Molière.

He continued, in spite of a quarrel with the saints of Port Royal, to produce noble dramas from time to time, but quitted theatrical pursuits after bringing out (in 1677) "Phèdre," that *chef d'œuvre* not only of its author, but, as a performance, of the unhappy but gifted Rachel. Corneille was old, and Paris looked to Racine to supply his place, yet he left the theatrical world for ever. Racine had been brought up with deep religious convictions; they could not, however,

preserve him from a mad, unlawful attachment. He loved the actress Champmesle: but repentance came. He resolved not only to write no more plays, but to do penance for those already given to the world. He was on the eve of becoming, in his penitence, a Carthusian friar, when his religious director advised marriage instead. He humbly did as he was told, and united himself to the daughter of a treasurer for France, of Amiens, by whom he had seven children. It was only at the request of Madame de Maintenon that he wrote "Esther" for the convent of St. Cyr, where it was first acted.

His death was the result of his benevolent, sensitive nature. Having drawn up an excellent paper on the miseries of the people, he gave it to Madame de Maintenon to read it to the king. Louis, in a transport of ill-humor, said, "What! does he suppose because he is a poet that he ought to be minister of state?" Racine is said to have been so wounded by this speech that he was attacked by fever and died. His decease took place in 1699, nineteen years after that of La Rochefoucault, who died in 1680.

Amongst the circle whom La Rochefoucault loved to assemble were Boileau, Despréaux, and Madame de Sévigné—the one whose wit and the other whose grace completed the delights of that salon. A life so prosperous as La Rochefoucault's had but one cloud—the death of his son, who was killed during the passage of the French troops over the Rhine. We attach to the

character of this accomplished man the charms of wit; we may also add the higher attractions of sensibility. Notwithstanding the worldly and selfish character which is breathed forth in his "Maxims and Reflections," there lay at the bottom of his heart true piety. Struck by the death of a neighbor, this sentiment seems even on the point of being expressed; but, adds Madame de Sévigné, as her phrase is untranslatable, "*il n'est pas effleuré.*"

All has passed away! the *Fronde* has become a memory, not a realized idea. Old people shake their heads, and talk of Richelieu; of his gorgeous palace at Rueil, with its lake and its prison thereon, and its mysterious dungeons, and its avenues of chestnuts, and its fine statues; and of its cardinal, smiling, whilst the worm that never dieth is eating into his very heart; a seared conscience, and playing the fine gentleman to fine ladies in a rich stole, and with much garniture of costly lace: whilst beneath all is the hair shirt, that type of penitence and sanctity which he ever wore as a salvo against all that passion and ambition that almost burst the beating heart beneath that hair shirt. Richelieu has gone to his fathers. Mazarin comes on the scene; the wily, grasping Italian. He too vanishes; and forth, radiant in youth, and strong in power, comes Louis, and the reign of politeness and periwigs begins.

The Duc de Saint-Simon, perhaps the greatest portrait-painter of any time, has familiarized us with the greatness, the littleness, the graces, the defects of

that royal actor on the stage of Europe, whom his own age entitled Louis the Great. A wit, in his writings, of the first order—if we comprise under the head of wit the deepest discernment, the most penetrating satire —Saint-Simon was also a soldier, philosopher, a reformer, a Trappist, and, eventually, a devotee. Like all young men who wished for court favor, he began by fighting: Louis cared little for carpet knights. He entered, however, into a scene which he has chronicled with as much fidelity as our journalists do a police report, and sat quietly down to gather observations—not for his own fame, not even for the amusement of his children or grandchildren—but for the edification of posterity yet a century afar off his own time. The treasures were buried until 1829.

A word or two about Saint-Simon and his youth. At nineteen he was destined by his mother to be married. Now every one knows how marriages are managed in France, not only in the time of Saint-Simon, but even to the present day. A mother or an aunt, or a grandmother, or an experienced friend, looks out; be it for son, be it for daughter, it is the business of her life. She looks and she finds: family, suitable; fortune, convenient; person, *pas mal;* principles, Catholic, with a due abhorrence of heretics, especially English ones. After a time, the lady is to be looked at by the unhappy *prétendû;* a church, a mass, or vespers, being very often the opportunity agreed. The victim thinks she will do. The proposal is discussed

by the two mammas; relatives are called in; all goes well; the contract is signed; then, a measured acquaintance is allowed: but no *tête-à-têtes;* no idea of love. "What! so indelicate a sentiment before marriage! Let me not hear of it," cries mamma, in a sanctimonious panic. "Love! *Quelle bêtise!*" adds *mon père.*

But Saint-Simon, it seems, had the folly to wish to make a marriage of inclination. Rich, *pair de France*, his father—an old *roué*, who had been page to Louis XIII.—dead, he felt extremely alone in the world. He cast about to see whom he could select. The Duc de Beauvilliers had eight daughters; a misfortune, it may be thought, in France or anywhere else. Not at all: three of the young ladies were kept at home, to be married; the other five were at once disposed of, as they passed the unconscious age of infancy, in convents. Saint-Simon was, however, disappointed. He offered, indeed; first for the eldest, who was not then fifteen years old; and finding that she had a vocation for a conventual life, went on to the third, and was going through the whole family, when he was convinced that his suit was impossible. The eldest daughter happened to be a disciple of Fénélon's, and was on the very eve of being vowed to heaven.

Saint-Simon went off to La Trappe, to console himself for his disappointment. There had been an old intimacy between Monsieur la Trappe and the father of Saint-Simon; and this friendship had induced him

to buy an estate close to the ancient abbey where La Trappe still existed. The friendship became hereditary; and Saint-Simon, though still a youth, revered and loved the penitent recluse of *Ferté au Vidame*, of which Lamartine has written so grand and so poetical a description.

Let us hasten over his marriage with Mademoiselle de Lorges, who proved a good wife. It was this time a grandmother, the Maréchale de Lorges, who managed the treaty; and Saint-Simon became the happy husband of an innocent blonde, with a majestic air, though only fifteen years of age. Let us hasten on, passing over his presents; his six hundred louis, given in a corbeille full of what he styles "gallantries;" his mother's donation of jewelry; the midnight mass, by which he was linked to the child who scarcely knew him; let us lay all that aside, and turn to his court life.

At this juncture Louis XIV., who had hitherto dressed with great simplicity, indicated that he desired his court should appear in all possible magnificence. Instantly the shops were emptied. Even gold and silver appeared scarcely rich enough. Louis himself planned many of the dresses for any public occasion. Afterwards he repented of the extent to which he had permitted magnificence to go, but it was then impossible to check the excess.

Versailles, henceforth in all its grandeur, contains an apartment which is called, from its situation, and

the opportunities it presents of looking down upon the actors of the scene around, *L'Œil de Bœuf*. The revelations of the Œil de Bœuf, during the reign of Louis XV., form one of the most amazing pictures of wickedness, venality, power misapplied, genius polluted, that was ever drawn. No one that reads that infamous book can wonder at the Revolution of 1789. Let us conceive Saint-Simon to have taken his stand here, in this region, pure in the time of Louis XIV., comparatively, and note we down his comments on men and women.

He has journeyed up to court from La Trappe, which has fallen into confusion and quarrels, to which the most saintly precincts are peculiarly liable.

The history of Mademoiselle de la Vallière was not, as he tells us, of his time. He hears of her death, and so indeed does the king, with emotion. She expired in 1710, in the Rue St. Jacques, at the Carmelite convent, where, though she was in the heart of Paris, her seclusion from the world had long been complete. Amongst the nuns of the convent none was so humble, so penitent, so chastened as this once lovely Louise de la Vallière, now, during a weary term of thirty-five years, "Marie de la Miséricorde." She had fled from the scene of her fall at one-and-thirty years of age. Twice had she taken refuge among the "blameless vestals," whom she envied as the broken-spirited envy the passive. First, she escaped from the torture of witnessing the king's passion for Madame de Monte-

span, by hiding herself among the Benedictine sisters at St. Cloud. Thence the king fetched her in person, threatening to order the cloister to be burnt. Next, Lauzun, by the command of Louis, sought her, and brought her *avec main forte*. The next time she fled no more; but took a public farewell of all she had too fondly loved, and, throwing herself at the feet of the queen, humbly entreated her pardon. Never since that voluntary sepulture had she ceased, during those long and weary years, to lament—as the heart-stricken can alone lament—her sins. In deep contrition she learned the death of her son by the king, and bent her head meekly beneath the chastisement.

Three years before her death the triumphant Athénée de Montespan had breathed her last at Bourbon. If Louis XIV. had nothing else to repent of, the remorse of these two women ought to have wrung his heart. Athénée de Montespan was a youthful, innocent beauty, fresh from the seclusion of provincial life, when she attracted the blighting regards of royalty. A *fête* was to be given; she saw, she heard that she was its object. She entreated her husband to take her back to his estate in Guyenne, and to leave her there till the king had forgotten her. Her husband, in fatal confidence, trusted her resistance, and refused her petition. It was a life-long sorrow; and he soon found his mistake. He lived and died passionately attached to his wife, but never saw her after her fall.

When she retired from court, to make room for the empire of the subtle De Maintenon, it was her son, the Duc de Maine, who induced her, not from love, but from ambition, to withdraw. She preserved, even in her seclusion in the country, the style of a queen, which she had assumed. Even her natural children by the king were never allowed to sit in her presence on a *fauteuil*, but were only permitted to have small chairs. Every one went to pay her court, and she spoke to them as if doing them an honor; neither did she ever return a visit, even from the royal family. Her fatal beauty endured to the last: nothing could exceed her grace, her tact, her good sense in conversation, her kindness to every one.

But it was long before her restless spirit could find real peace. She threw herself on the guidance of the Abbé de la Tour; for the dread of death was ever upon her. He suggested a terrible test of her penitence. It was, that she should entreat her husband's pardon, and return to him. It was a fearful struggle with herself, for she was naturally haughty and high-spirited; but she consented. After long agonies of hesitation she wrote to the injured man. Her letter was couched in the most humble language; but it received no reply. The Marquis de Montespan, through a third person, intimated to her that he would neither receive her, nor see her, nor hear her name pronounced. At his death she wore widow's weeds; but never assumed his arms, nor adopted his liveries.

Henceforth, all she had was given to the poor. When Louis meanly cut down her pension, she sent word that she was sorry for the poor, not for herself; they would be the losers. She then humbled herself to the very dust: wore the hardest cloth next her fair skin; had iron bracelets; and an iron girdle, which made wounds on her body. Moreover, she punished the most unruly members of her frame: she kept her tongue in bounds; she ceased to slander; she learned to bless. The fear of death still haunted her; she lay in bed with every curtain drawn, the room lighted up with wax candles; whilst she hired watchers to sit up all night, and insisted that they should never cease talking or laughing, lest, when she woke, the fear of *death* might come over her affrighted spirit.

She died at last after a few hours' illness, having just time to order all her household to be summoned, and before them to make a public confession of her sins. As she lay expiring, blessing God that she died far away from the children of her adulterous connection, the Comte d'Antin, her only child by the Marquis de Montespan, arrived. Peace and trust had then come at last to the agonized woman. She spoke to him about her state of mind, and expired.

To Madame de Maintenon the event would, it was thought, be a relief: yet she wept bitterly on hearing of it. The king showed, on the contrary, the utmost indifference, on learning that one whom he had once loved so much was gone for ever.

All has passed away! The *Œil de Bœuf* is now important only as being pointed out to strangers; Versailles is a show-place, not a habitation. Saint-Simon, who lived until 1775, was truly said to have turned his back on the new age, and to live in the memories of a former world of wit and fashion. He survived until the era of the "Encyclopédie" of Voltaire, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He lived, indeed, to hear that Montesquieu was no more. How the spirit of Louis XIV. spoke in his contemptuous remarks on Voltaire, whom he would only call Arouet; "The son of my father's and my own notary."

At length, after attaining his eightieth year, the chronicler, who knew the weaknesses, the vices, the peculiarities of mankind, even to a hair's breadth, expired; having long given up the court and occupied himself, whilst secluded in his country-seat, solely with the revising and amplification of his wonderful Memoirs.

No works, it has been remarked, since those of Sir Walter Scott, have excited so much sensation as the Memoirs of his own time, by the soldier, ambassador, and *Trappist*, Duc de Saint-Simon.

HORACE WALPOLE.

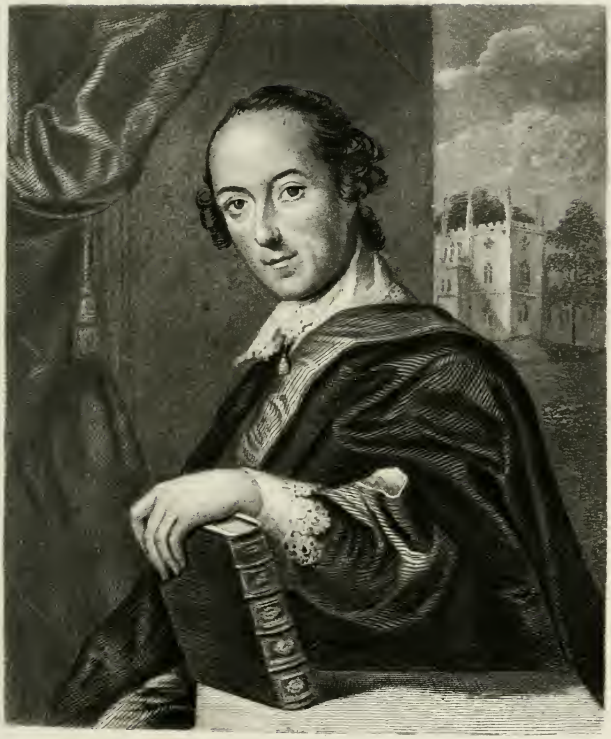
Had this elegant writer, remarks the compiler of "Walpoliana," composed memoirs of his own life, an example authorized by eminent names, ancient and modern, every other pen must have been dropped in despair, so true was it that "he united the good sense of Fontenelle with the Attic salt and graces of Count Anthony Hamilton."

But "Horace" was a man of great literary modesty, and always undervalued his own efforts. His life was one of little incident: it is his character, his mind, the society around him, the period in which he shone, that give the charm to his correspondence and the interest to his biography.

Besides, he had the weakness common to several other fine gentlemen who have combined letters and *haut ton*, of being ashamed of the literary character. The vulgarity of the court, its indifference to all that was not party writing, whether polemical or political, cast a shade over authors in his time.

Never was there, beneath all his assumed Whig principles, a more profound aristocrat than Horace Walpole. He was, by birth, one of those well-descended English gentlemen who have often scorned

Horace Walpole.



the title of noble, and who have repudiated the notion of merging their own ancient names in modern titles. The commoners of England hold a proud pre-eminence. When some low-born man entreated James I. to make him a gentleman, the well-known answer was, "Na, na, I canna! I could mak thee a lord, but none but God Almighty can mak a gentleman."

Sir Robert Walpole, afterwards minister to George II., and eventually Lord Orford, belonged to an ancient family in Norfolk; he was a third son, and was originally destined for the Church, but the death of his elder brethren having left him heir to the family estate, in 1698 he succeeded to a property which ought to have yielded him £2000 a year, but which was crippled with various incumbrances. In order to relieve himself of these, Sir Robert married Catherine Shorter, the granddaughter of Sir John Shorter, who had been illegally and arbitrarily appointed Lord Mayor of London by James II.

Horace was her youngest child, and was born in Arlington Street, on the 24th of September, 1717, O. S. Six years afterwards he was inoculated for the small-pox, a precaution which he records as worthy of remark, since the operation had then only recently been introduced by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu from Turkey.

He is silent, however, naturally enough, as to one important point—his real parentage. The character of his mother was by no means such as to disprove an

assertion which gained general belief: this was, that Horace was the offspring, not of Sir Robert Walpole, but of Carr, Lord Hervey, the eldest son of the Earl of Bristol, and the elder brother of Lord Hervey, whose "Memoirs of the Court of George II." are so generally known. Carr, Lord Hervey, was witty, eccentric, and sarcastic: and from him Horace Walpole is said to have inherited his wit, his eccentricity, his love of literature, and his profound contempt for all mankind, excepting only a few members of a cherished and exclusive *clique*.

In the Notes of his life which Horace Walpole left for the use of his executor, Robert Berry, Esq., and of his daughter, Miss Berry, he makes this brief mention of Lady Walpole:—"My mother died in 1737." He was then twenty years of age.

But beneath this seemingly slight recurrence to his mother, a regret which never left him through life was buried. Like Cowper, he mourned, as the profoundest of all sorrows, the loss of that life-long friend:

> "My mother, when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
> Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
> Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son?
> Wretch even then, life's journey just begun."

Although Horace in many points bore a strong resemblance to Sir Robert Walpole, he rarely if ever received from that jovial, heartless, able man, any proof of affection. An outcast from his father's heart,

the whole force of the boy's love centred in his mother; yet in after-life no one reverenced Sir Robert Walpole so much as his supposed son. To be adverse to the minister was to be adverse to the unloved son who cherished his memory. What "my father" thought, did, and said, was law; what his foes dared to express was heresy. Horace had the family mania strong upon him; the world was made for Walpoles, whose views were never to be controverted, nor whose faith impugned. Yet Horace must have witnessed, perhaps without comprehending it, much disunion at home. Lady Walpole, beautiful and accomplished, could not succeed in riveting her husband to his conjugal duties. Gross licentiousness was the order of the day, and Sir Robert was among the most licentious; he left his lovely wife to the perilous attentions of all the young courtiers who fancied that by courting the Premier's wife they could secure Walpole's good offices. Sir Robert, according to Pope, was one of those who

> "Never made a friend in private life,
> And was, besides, a tyrant to his wife."

At all events, if not a tyrant, he was indifferent to those circumstances which reflected upon him, and were injurious to her. He was conscious that he had no right to complain of any infidelity on her part, and left her to be surrounded by men whom he knew to be profligates of the most dangerous pretensions to wit and elegance.

It was possibly not unfrequently that Horace, his mother's pet, gleaned in the drawing-rooms of Arlington Street his first notions of that *persiflage* which was the fashion of the day. We can fancy him a precocious, old-fashioned little boy, at his mother's apron-strings, whilst Carr, Lord Hervey, was paying his devoirs; we see him gazing with wondering eyes at Pulteney, Earl of Bath, with his blue ribbon across his laced coat; whilst compassionating friends, observing the pale-faced boy in that hot-house atmosphere, in which both mind and body were like forced plants, prophesied that "little Horace" could not possibly live to be a man.

He survived, however, two sisters, who died in childhood, and became dearer and dearer to his fond mother.

In his old age, Horace delighted in recalling anecdotes of his infancy; in these his mother's partiality largely figured. Brought up among courtiers and ministers, his childish talk was all of kings and princes; and he was a gossip both by inclination and habit. His greatest desire in life was to see the king—George I.—and his nurses and attendants augmented his wish by their exalted descriptions of the grandeur which he affected, in after-life, to despise. He entreated his mother to take him to St. James's. When relating the incidents of the scene in which he was first introduced to a court, Horace Walpole speaks of the "infinite good-nature of his father, who never thwarted any

of his children," and "suffered him," he says, "to be too much indulged."

Some difficulties attended the fruition of the forward boy's wish. The Duchess of Kendal was jealous of Sir Robert Walpole's influence with the king: her aim was to bring Lord Bolingbroke into power. The childish fancy was, nevertheless, gratified: and under his mother's care he was conducted to the apartments of the Duchess of Kendal in St. James's.

"A favor so unusual to be asked by a boy of ten years old," he afterwards wrote in his "Reminiscences," "was still too slight to be refused to the wife of the first minister and her darling child." However, as it was not to be a precedent, the interview was to be private, and at night.

It was ten o'clock in the evening when Lady Walpole, leading her son, was admitted into the apartments of Melusina de Schulenberg, Countess of Walsingham, who passed under the name of the Duchess of Kendal's niece, but who was, in fact, her daughter by George I. The polluted rooms in which Lady Walsingham lived were afterwards occupied by the two mistresses of George II.—the Countess of Suffolk, and Madame de Walmoden, Countess of Yarmouth.

With Lady Walsingham, Lady Walpole and her little son waited until, notice having been given that the king had come down to supper, he was led into the presence of "that good sort of man," as he calls George I. That monarch was pleased to permit the

young courtier to kneel down and kiss his hand. A few words were spoken by the august personage, and Horace was led back into the adjoining room.

But the vision of that "good sort of man" was present to him when, in old age, he wrote down his recollections for his beloved Miss Berry. By the side of a tall, lean, ill-favored old German lady—the Duchess of Kendal—stood a pale, short, elderly man, with a dark tie-wig, in a plain coat and waistcoat: these and his breeches were all snuff-colored cloth, and his stockings of the same color. By the blue ribbon alone could the young subject of this "good sort of man" discern that he was in the presence of majesty. Little interest could be elicited in this brief interview, yet Horace thought it his painful duty, being also the son of a prime minister, to shed tears when, with the other scholars of Eton College, he walked in the procession to the proclamation of George II. And no doubt he was one of the *very* few personages in England whose eyes were moistened for that event. Nevertheless, there was something of *bonhommie* in the character of George I. that one misses in his successor. His love of punch, and his habit of becoming a little tipsy over his private dinners with Sir Robert Walpole, were English as well as German traits, and were regarded almost as condescensions; and then he had a kind of slow wit, that was turned upon the venial officials whose perquisites were at their disgraceful height in his time.

"A strange country this," said the monarch, in his most clamorous German: "one day, after I came to St. James's, I looked out of the window, and saw a park, with walks, laurels, etc.; these they told me were mine. The next day, Lord Chetwynd, the ranger of *my* park, sends me a brace of carp out of my canal; I was told, thereupon, that I must give five guineas to Lord Chetwynd's porter for bringing me my *own* fish, out of my *own* canal, in my *own* park!" In spite of some agreeable qualities, George I. was, however, anything but a "good sort of man." It is difficult how to rank the first two Georges; both were detestable as men, and scarcely tolerable as monarchs. The foreign deeds of George I. were stained with the supposed murder of Count Konigsmark: the English career of George II. was one of the coarsest profligacy. Their example was infamous.

His father's only sister having become the second wife of Charles Lord Townshend, Horace was educated with his cousins; and the tutor selected was Edward Weston, the son of Stephen, Bishop of Exeter; this preceptor was afterwards engaged in a controversy with Dr. Warburton, concerning the "Naturalization of the Jews." By that learned, haughty disputant, he is termed "a gazetteer by profession—by inclination a Methodist." Such was the man who guided the dawning intellect of Horace Walpole. Under his care he remained until he went, in 1727, to Eton. But Walpole's was not merely a scholastic education:

he was destined for the law—and, on going up to Cambridge, was obliged to attend lectures on civil law. He went from Eton to King's College—where he was, however, more disposed to what are termed accomplishments than to deep reading. At Cambridge he even studied Italian; at home he learned to dance and fence; and took lessons in drawing from Bernard Lens, drawing-master to the Duke of Cumberland and his sisters. It is not to be wondered at that he left Cambridge without taking a degree.

But fortune was lying, as it were, in wait for him; and various sinecures had been reserved for the Minister's youngest son: first, he became Inspector of the Imports and Exports in the Customs; but soon resigned that post to be the Usher of the Exchequer. "And as soon," he writes, "as I became of age I took possession of two other little patent places in the Exchequer, called Comptroller of the Pipe, and Clerk of the Estreats. They had been held for me by Mr. Fane."

Such was the mode in which the younger sons were then provided for by a minister; nor has the unworthy system died out in our time, although greatly modified.

Horace was growing up meantime, not an awkward, but a somewhat insignificant youth, with a short, slender figure: which always retained a boyish appearance when seen from behind. His face was commonplace, except when his really expressive eyes sparkled with

intelligence, or melted into the sweetest expression of kindness. But his laugh was forced and uncouth: and even in his smile there was a hard, sarcastic expression that made one regret that he smiled.

He was now in possession of an income of £1700 annually, and he looked naturally to the Continent, to which all young members of the aristocracy repaired after the completion of their collegiate life.

He had been popular at Eton: he was also, it is said, both beloved and valued at Cambridge. In reference to his Etonian days he says, in one of his letters, "I can't say I am sorry I was never quite a schoolboy: an expedition against bargemen, or a match at cricket, may be very pretty things to recollect; but, thank my stars, I can remember things that are very near as pretty. The beginning of my Roman history was spent in the asylum, or conversing in Egeria's hallowed grove; not in thumping and pummelling King Amulius's herdsmen.[1]

"I remember," he adds, "when I was at Eton, and Mr. Bland had set me on an extraordinary task, I used sometimes to pique myself upon not getting it, because it was not immediately my school business. What! learn more than I was absolutely forced to learn! I felt the weight of learning that; for I was a blockhead, *and pushed above my parts.*"[2]

Popular amongst his schoolfellows, Horace formed friendships at Eton which mainly influenced his after-

[1] Life by Warburton, p. 70. [2] Ibid., p. 63.

life. Richard West, the son of West, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and the grandson, on his mother's side, of Bishop Burnet; together with a youth named Assheton—formed, with the poet Gray, and Horace himself, what the young wit termed the "Quadruple Alliance." Then there was the "triumvirate," George Montagu, Charles Montagu, and Horace; next came George Selwyn and Hanbury Williams; lastly, a retired, studious youth, a sort of foil to all these gay, brilliant young wits—a certain William Cole, a lover of old books and of quaint prints. And in all these boyish friendships, some of which were carried from Eton to Cambridge, may be traced the foundation of the Horace Walpole, of Strawberry Hill and of Berkeley Square. To Gray he owed his ambition to be learned, if possible—poetical, if nature had not forbidden; to the Montagus, his dash and spirit; to Sir Hanbury Williams, his turn for *jeux d'esprit*, as a part of the completion of a fine gentleman's education; to George Selwyn, his appreciation of what was then considered wit—but which we moderns are not worthy to appreciate. Lord Hertford and Henry Conway, Walpole's cousins, were also his schoolfellows; and for them he evinced throughout his long life a warm regard. William Pitt, Lord Chatham—chiefly remembered at Eton for having been flogged for being out of bounds—was a contemporary, though not an intimate, of Horace Walpole's at Eton.

His regard for Gray did him infinite credit: yet never were two men more dissimilar as they advanced in life. Gray had no aristocratic birth to boast; and Horace dearly loved birth, refinement, position, all that comprises the cherished term "aristocracy." Thomas Gray, more illustrious for the little his fastidious judgment permitted him to give to the then critical world, than many have been in their productions of volumes, was born in Cornhill—his father being a worthy citizen. He was just one year older than Walpole, but an age his senior in gravity, precision, and in a stiff resolution to maintain his independence. He made one fatal step, fatal to his friendship for Horace, when he forfeited—by allowing Horace to take him and pay his expenses during a long continental tour—his independence. Gray had many points which made him vulnerable to Walpole's shafts of ridicule; and Horace had a host of faults which excited the stern condemnation of Gray. The author of the "Elegy"—which Johnson has pronounced to be the noblest ode in our language—was one of the most learned men of his time, "and was equally acquainted with the elegant and profound paths of science, and that not superficially, but thoroughly; knowing in every branch of history, both natural and civil, as having read all the original historians of England, France, and Italy; a great antiquarian, who made criticism, metaphysics, morals, and politics a principal part of his plan of study—who was uncommonly fond of voyages and

travels of all sorts—and who had a fine taste in painting, prints, architecture, and gardening."

What a companion for a young man of taste and sympathy! but the friends were far too clever long to agree. Gray was haughty, impatient, intolerant of the peculiarities of others, according to the author of "Walpoliana:" doubtless he detected the vanity, the actual selfishness, the want of earnest feeling in Horace, which had all been kept down at school, where boys are far more unsparing Mentors than their betters. In vain did they travel *en prince*, and all at Walpole's expense; in vain did they visit courts, and receive affability from princes; in vain did he of Cornhill participate for a brief period in the attentions lavished on the son of a British Prime Minister: they quarrelled—and we almost reverence Gray for that result, more especially when we find the author of "Walpoliana" expressing his conviction that "had it not been for this idle indulgence of his hasty temper, Mr. Gray would immediately on his return home have received, as usual, a pension or office from Sir Robert Walpole." We are inclined to feel contempt for the anonymous writer of that amusing little book.

After a companionship of four years, Gray, nevertheless, returned to London. He had been educated with the expectation of being a barrister; but finding that funds were wanting to pursue a legal education,

he gave up a set of chambers in the Temple, which he had occupied previous to his travels, and retired to Cambridge.

Henceforth what a singular contrast did the lives of these once fond friends present! In the small quaint rooms of Peter-House,[1] Gray consumed a dreary celibacy, consoled by the Muse alone, who—if other damsels found no charms in his somwhat priggish, wooden countenance, or in his manners, replete, it is said, with an unpleasant consciousness of superiority—never deserted him. His college existence, varied only by his being appointed Professor of Modern History, was, for a brief space, exchanged for an existence almost as studious in London. Between the years 1759 and 1762 he took lodgings, we find, in Southampton Row —a pleasant locality then, opening to the fields—in order to be near the British Museum, at that time just opened to the public. Here his intense studies were, it may be presumed, relieved by the lighter task of perusing the Harleian Manuscripts; and here he formed the acquaintance of Mason, a dull, affected poet, whose celebrity is greater as the friend and biographer of Gray, than even as the author of those verses on the death of Lady Coventry, in which there are, nevertheless, some beautiful lines. Gray died in college—a doom that, next to ending one's days in a jail or a convent, seems the dreariest. He died of the gout: a suitable, and, in that region and in those three-

[1] Gray migrated to Pembroke in 1756.

bottle days, almost an inevitable disease; but there is no record of his having been intemperate.

Whilst Gray was poring over dusty manuscripts, Horace was beginning that career of prosperity which was commenced by the keenest enjoyment of existence. He has left us, in his Letters, some brilliant passages, indicative of the delights of his boyhood and youth. Like him, we linger over a period still fresh, still hopeful, still generous in impulse—still strong in faith in the world's worth—before we hasten on to portray the man of the world, heartless, not wholly, perhaps, but wont to check all feeling till it was well-nigh quenched; little-minded; bitter, if not spiteful; with many acquaintances and scarce one friend—the Horace Walpole of Berkeley Square and Strawberry Hill.

"Youthful passages of life are," he says, "the chippings of Pitt's diamond, set into little heart-rings with mottoes; the stone itself more worth, the fillings more gentle and agreeable. Alexander, at the head of the world, never tasted the true pleasures that boys of his age have enjoyed at the head of a school. Little intrigues, little schemes and policies engage their thoughts; and at the same time that they are laying the foundation for their middle age of life, the mimic republic they live in furnishes materials for conversation for their latter age; and old men cannot be said to be children a second time with greater truth from any one cause, than their living over again their childhood in imagination."

Again: "Dear George, were not the playing-fields at Eton food for all manner of flights? No old maid's gown, though it had been tormented into all the fashions from King James to King George, ever underwent so many transformations as these poor plains have in my idea. At first I was contented with tending a visionary flock, and sighing some pastoral name to the echo of the cascade under the bridge. . . . As I got further into Virgil and Clelia, I found myself transported from Arcadia to the garden of Italy; and saw Windsor Castle in no other view than the *Capitoli immobile saxum.*"

Horace Walpole's humble friend Assheton was another of those Etonians who were plodding on to independence, whilst he, set forward by fortune and interest, was accomplishing reputation. Assheton was the son of a worthy man, who presided over the Grammar School at Lancaster upon a stipend of £32 a year. Assheton's mother had brought to her husband a small estate. This was sold to educate the "boys:" they were both clever and deserving. One became the fellow of Trinity College; the other, the friend of Horace, rose into notice as the tutor of the young Earl of Plymouth; then became a D.D., and a fashionable preacher in London; was elected preacher at Lincoln's Inn; attacked the Methodists; and died, at fifty-three, at variance with Horace—this Assheton, whom once he had loved so much.

Horace, on the other hand, after having seen during

his travels all that was most exclusive, attractive, and lofty, both in art and in nature, came home without bringing, he declares, "one word of French or Italian for common use." He professed, indeed, to prefer England to all other countries. A country tour in England delighted him: the populousness, the ease in the people also, charmed him. "Canterbury was a paradise to Modena, Reggio, or Parma." He had, before he returned, perceived that nowhere except in England was there the distinction of "middling people;" he now found that nowhere but in England were middling houses. "How snug they are!" exclaims this scion of the exclusives. Then he runs on into an anecdote about Pope and Frederick, Prince of Wales. "Mr. Pope," said the prince, "you don't love princes." "Sir, I beg your pardon." "Well, you don't love kings, then." "Sir, I own I like the lion better before his claws are grown." The "Horace Walpole" began now to creep out: never was he really at home except in a court atmosphere. Still he assumed, even at twenty-four, to be the boy.

"You won't find me," he writes to Harry Conway, "much altered, I believe; at least, outwardly. I am not grown a bit shorter or fatter, but am just the same long, lean creature as usual. Then I talk no French but to my footman; nor Italian, but to myself. What inward alterations may have happened to me you will discover best; for you know 'tis said, one never knows that one's self. I will answer, that that part of it

that belongs to you has not suffered the least change —I took care of that. For *virtù*, I have a little to entertain you—it is my sole pleasure. I am neither young enough nor old enough to be in love."

Nevertheless, it peeps out soon after that the "Pomfrets" are coming back. Horace had known them in Italy. The Earl and Countess and their daughters were just then the very pink of fashion; and even the leaders of all that was exclusive in the court. Half in ridicule, half in earnest, are the remarks which, throughout all the career of Horace, incessantly occur. "I am neither young enough nor old enough to be in love," he says; yet that he was in love with one of the lovely Fermors is traditionary still in the family—and that tradition pointed at Lady Juliana, the youngest, afterwards married to Mr. Penn. The Earl of Pomfret had been master of the horse to Queen Caroline: Lady Pomfret, lady of the bed-chamber. "My Earl," as the countess styled him, was apparently a supine subject to her ladyship's strong will and wrong-headed ability—which she, perhaps, inherited from her grandfather, Judge Jeffreys; she being the daughter and heiress of that rash young Lord Jeffreys, who, in a spirit of braggadocia, stopped the funeral of Dryden on its way to Westminster, promising a more splendid procession than the poor, humble cortège—a boast which he never fulfilled. Lady Sophia Fermor, the eldest daughter, who afterwards became the wife of Lord Carteret, resembled, in beauty, the famed Mistress

Arabella Fermor, the heroine of the "Rape of the Lock." Horace Walpole admired Lady Sophia—whom he christened Juno—intensely. Scarcely a letter drips from his pen—as a modern novelist used to express it[1]—without some touch of the Pomfrets. Thus to Sir Horace Mann, then a diplomatist at Florence:—

"Lady Pomfret I saw last night. Lady Sophia has been ill with a cold; her head is to be dressed French, and her body English, for which I am sorry, her figure is so fine in a robe. She is full as sorry as I am."

Again, at a ball at Sir Thomas Robinson's, where four-and-twenty couples danced country-dances in two sets, twelve and twelve, "there was Lady Sophia, handsomer than ever, but a little out of humor at the scarcity of minuets; however, as usual, dancing more than anybody, and, as usual too, she took out what men she liked, or thought the best dancers." . . . "We danced; for I country-danced till four, then had tea and coffee, and came home." Poor Horace! Lady Sophia was not for a younger son, however gay, talented, or rich he might be.

His pique and resentment towards her mother, who had higher views for her beautiful daughter, begin at this period to show themselves, and never died away.

Lady Townshend was the wit who used to gratify

[1] The accomplished novelist, Mrs. Gore, famous for her facility, used to say that a three-volume novel just "dripped from her pen."

Horace with tales of her whom he hated—Henrietta-Louisa, Countess of Pomfret.

"Lady Townshend told me an admirable history: it is of *our friend* Lady Pomfret. Somebody that belonged to the Prince of Wales said, they were going to *court;* it was objected that they ought to say to Carlton House; that the only *court* is where the king resides. Lady P., with her paltry air of significant learning and absurdity, said, 'Oh, Lord! is there no *court* in England but the king's? Sure, there are many more! There is the *Court* of Chancery, the *Court* of Exchequer, the *Court* of King's Bench, etc.' Don't you love her? Lord Lincoln does her daughter —Lady Sophia Fermor. He is come over, and met me and her the other night; he turned pale, spoke to her several times in the evening, but not long, and sighed to me at going away. He came over all alone; and not only his Uncle Duke (the Duke of Newcastle) but even Majesty is fallen in love with him. He talked to the king at his levee, without being spoken to. That was always thought high treason; but I don't know how the gruff gentleman liked it. And then he had been told that Lord Lincoln designed to have made the campaign, if we had gone to war; in short, he says Lord Lincoln is the handsomest man in England."

Horace was not, therefore, the only victim to a mother's ambition: there is something touching in the interest he from time to time evinces in poor Lord Lincoln's hopeless love. On another occasion, a second

ball of Sir Thomas Robinson's, Lord Lincoln, out of prudence, dances with Lady Caroline Fitzroy, Mr. Conway taking Lady Sophia Fermor. "The two couple were just admirably mismatched, as everybody soon perceived, by the attentions of each man to the woman he did not dance with, and the emulation of either lady; it was an admirable scene."

All, however, was not country-dancing: the young man, "too old and too young to be in love," was to make his way as a wit. He did so, in the approved way in that day of irreligion, in a political squib. On July 14th, 1742, he writes in his Notes, "I wrote the '*Lessons for the Day;*' the 'Lessons for the day' being the first and second chapters of the 'Book of Preferment.'" Horace was proud of this *brochure*, for he says it got about surreptitiously, and was "the original of many things of that sort." Various *jeux d'esprit* of a similar sort followed—a "Sermon on Painting," which was preached before Sir Robert Walpole, in the gallery at Houghton, by his chaplain; "Patapan, or the Little White Dog," imitated from La Fontaine; No. 38 of the "Old England Journal," intended to ridicule Lord Bath; and then, in a magazine, was printed his "Scheme for a Tax on Message Cards and Notes." Next the "Beauties," which was also handed about, and got into print. So that without the vulgarity of publishing, the reputation of the dandy writer was soon noised about. His religious tenets may or may not have been sound; but at all

events the tone of his mind assumed at this time a very different character to that reverent strain in which, when a youth at college, he had apostrophized those who bowed their heads beneath the vaulted roof of King's College, in his eulogium in the character of Henry VI.:

"Ascend the temple, join the vocal choir,
Let harmony your raptured souls inspire.
Hark how the tuneful, solemn organs blow,
Awfully strong, elaborately slow;
Now to yon empyrean seats above
Raise meditation on the wings of love.
Now falling, sinking, dying to the moan
Once warbled sad by Jesse's contrite son;
Breathe in each note a conscience through the sense,
And call forth tears from soft-eyed Penitence."

In the midst of all his gayeties, his successes, and perhaps his hopes, a cloud hovered over the destinies of his father. The opposition, Horace saw, in 1741, wished to ruin his father "by ruining his constitution." They wished to continue their debates on Saturdays, Sir Robert's only day of rest, when he used to rush to Richmond New Park, there to amuse himself with a favorite pack of beagles. Notwithstanding the minister's indifference to this his youngest son, Horace felt bitterly what he considered a persecution against one of the most corrupt of modern statesmen.

"Trust me, if we fall, all the grandeur, all the envied grandeur of our house, will not cost me a sigh:

it has given me no pleasure while we have it, and will give me no pain when I part with it. My liberty, my ease, and choice of my own friends and company, will sufficiently counterbalance the crowds of Downing Street. I am so sick of it all, that if we are victorious or not, I propose leaving England in the spring."

The struggle was not destined to last long. Sir Robert was forced to give up the contest and be shelved with a peerage. In 1742, he was created Earl of Orford, and resigned. The wonder is that, with a mortal internal disease to contend with, he should have faced his foes so long. Verses ascribed to Lord Hervey ended, as did all the squibs of the day, with a fling at that "rogue Walpole:"

> "For though you have made that rogue Walpole retire,
> You are out of the frying-pan into the fire:
> But since to the Protestant line I'm a friend,
> I tremble to think how these changes may end."

Horace, notwithstanding an affected indifference, felt his father's downfall poignantly. He went, indeed, to court, in spite of a cold, taken in an unaired house; for the prime minister now quitted Downing Street for Arlington Street. The court was crowded, he found, with old ladies, the wives of patriots who had not been there for "these twenty years," and who appeared in the accoutrements that were in vogue in Queen Anne's time. "Then," he writes, "the joy and awkward

jollity of them is inexpressible! They titter, and, wherever you meet them, they are always looking at their watches an hour before the time. I met several on the birthday (for I did not arrive time enough to make clothes), and they were dressed in all the colors of the rainbow. They seem to have said to themselves, twenty years ago, 'Well, if ever I do go to court again, I will have a pink and silver, or a blue and silver,' and they keep their resolutions."

Another characteristic anecdote betrays his ill-suppressed vexation:—

"I laughed at myself prodigiously the other day for a piece of absence. I was writing, on the king's birthday, and being disturbed with the mob in the street, I rang for the porter and with an air of grandeur, as if I was still at Downing Street, cried, 'Pray send away those marrow-bones and cleavers!' The poor fellow, with the most mortified air in the world, replied, 'Sir, they are not at *our* door, but over the way, at my Lord Carteret's.'—'Oh!' said I, 'then let them alone; may be, he does not dislike the noise!' I pity the poor porter, who sees all his customers going over the way too."

The retirement of Sir Robert from office had an important effect on the tastes and future life of his son Horace. The minister had been occupying his later years in pulling down his old ancestral house at Houghton, and in building an enormous mansion, which has since his time been, in its turn, partially

demolished. When Harley, Earl of Oxford, was known to be erecting a great house for himself, Sir Robert had remarked that a minister who did so committed a great imprudence. When Houghton was begun, Sir Hynde Aston reminded Sir Robert of this speech. "You ought to have recalled it to me before," was the reply; "for before I began building, it might have been of use to me."

This famous memorial of Walpolian greatness, this splendid folly, constructed, it is generally supposed, on public money, was inhabited by Sir Robert only ten days in summer, and twenty days in winter; in the autumn, during the shooting season, two months. It became almost an eyesore to the quiet gentry, who viewed the palace with a feeling of their own inferiority. People as good as the Walpoles lived in their gable-ended, moderate-sized mansions; and who was Sir Robert, to set them at so immense a distance?

To the vulgar comprehension of the Premier, Houghton, gigantic in its proportions, had its purposes. He there assembled his supporters; there, for a short time, he entertained his constituents and coadjutors with a magnificent, jovial hospitality, of which he, with his gay spirits, his humorous, indelicate jokes, and his unbounded good-nature, was the very soul. Free conversation, hard-drinking, were the features of every day's feast. Pope thus describes him:—

> "Seen him, I have, but in his happier hour,
> Of social pleasure, ill exchanged for power;

Seen him uncumbered with the venal tribe,
Smile without art, and win without a bribe."

Amid the coarse taste one gentle refinement existed: this was the love of gardening, both in its smaller compass and in its nobler sense of landscape gardening. "This place," Sir Robert, in 1743, wrote to General Churchill, from Houghton, "affords no news, no subject of entertainment or amusement; for fine men of wit and pleasure about town understand neither the language and taste, nor the pleasure of the inanimate world. My flatterers here are all mutes: the oaks, the beeches, the chestnuts, seem to contend which best shall please the lord of the manor. They cannot deceive; they will not lie. I in sincerity admire them, and have as many beauties about me as fill up all my hours of dangling, and no disgrace attending me, from sixty-seven years of age. Within doors we come a little nearer to real life, and admire, upon the almost speaking canvas, all the airs and graces the proudest ladies can boast."

In these pursuits Horace cordially shared. Through his agency, Horace Mann, still in the diplomatic service, at Florence, selected and purchased works of art, which were sent either to Arlington Street, or to form the famous Houghton Collection, to which Horace so often refers in that delightful work, his "Anecdotes of Painting."

Amongst the embellishments of Houghton, the gardens were the most expensive.

"Sir Robert has pleased himself," Pulteney, Earl of Bath, wrote, "with erecting palaces and extending parks, planting gardens in places to which the very earth was to be transported in carriages, and embracing cascades and fountains whose water was only to be obtained by aqueducts and machines, and imitating the extravagance of Oriental monarchs, at the expense of a free people whom he has at once impoverished and betrayed."

The ex-minister went to a great expense in the cultivation of plants, bought Uvedale's "Hortus Siccus;" and received from Bradley, the Professor of Botany at Cambridge, the tribute of a dedication, in which it was said that "Sir Robert had purchased one of the finest collections of plants in the kingdom."

What was more to his honor still, was Sir Robert's preservation of St. James's Park for the people. Fond of outdoor amusements himself, the Premier heard, with dismay, a proposal on the part of Queen Caroline to convert that ancient park into a palace garden. "She asked my father," Horace Walpole relates, "what the alteration might possibly cost?"—"*Only three crowns*," was the civil, witty, candid answer. The queen was wise enough to take the hint. It is possible she meant to convert the park into gardens that should be open to the public as at Berlin, Mannheim, and even the Tuileries. Still, it would not have been ours.

Horace Walpole owed, perhaps, his love of architecture and his taste for gardening, partly to the early

companionship of Gray, who delighted in those pursuits. Walpole's estimation of pictures, medals, and statues was, however, the fruit of a long residence abroad. We are apt to rail at continental nations; yet had it not been for the occasional intercourse with foreign nations, art would have altogether died out among us. To the "Grandes Tours," performed as a matter of course by our young nobility in the most impressionable period of their lives, we owe most of our noble private collections. Charles I. and Buckingham renewed, in their travels in Spain, the efforts previously made by Lord Arundel and Lord Pembroke, to embellish their country seats. Then came the Rebellion; and like a mighty rushing river, made a chasm in which much perished. Art languished in the reign of the second Charles, excepting in what related to portrait painting. Evelyn stood almost alone in his then secluded and lovely retirement at Wotton; apart in his undying exertions still to arrest the Muses ere they quitted for ever English shores. Then came the deadly frost of William's icy influence. The reign of Anne was conspicuous more for letters than for art: architecture, more especially, was vulgarized under Vanbrugh. George I. had no conception of anything abstract: taste, erudition, science, art, were like a dead language to his common sense, his vulgar profligacy, and his personal predilections. Neither George II. nor his queen had an iota of taste, either in language, conduct, literature, or art. To be vulgar, was

haut-ton ; to be refined, to have pursuits that took one from low party gossip, or heterodox disquisitions upon party, was esteemed odd: everything original was cramped; everything imaginative was sneered at; the enthusiasm that is elevated by religion was unphilosophic; the poetry that is breathed out from the works of genius was not comprehended.

It was at Houghton, under the roof of that monster palace, that Horace Walpole indulged that taste for pictures which he had acquired in Italy. His chief coadjutor, however, as far as the antiquities of painting are concerned, was George Vertue, the eminent engraver. Vertue was a man of modest merit, and was educated merely as an engraver; but, conscious of talent, studied drawing, which he afterwards applied to engraving. He was patronized both by the vain Godfrey Kneller and by the intellectual Lord Somers: yet his works have more fidelity than elegance, and betray in every line the antiquary rather than the genius. Vertue was known to be a first-rate authority as to the history of a painter; he was admitted and welcomed into every great country house in England; he lived in an atmosphere of vertù; every line a dilettante collector wrote, every word he uttered, was minuted down by him; he visited every collection of rarities; he copied every paper he could find relative to art; registers of wills, and registers of parishes, for births and deaths were his delight; sales his recreation. He was the "Old Mortality" of pictures in this country. No

wonder that his compilations were barely contained in forty volumes, which he left in manuscript. Human nature has singular varieties: here was a man who expended his very existence in gathering up the works of others, and died without giving to the world one of his own. But Horace Walpole has done him justice. After Vertue's death he bought his manuscripts from his widow. In one of his pocket-books was contained the whole history of this man of one idea: Vertue began his collection in 1713, and worked at it until his death in 1757, forty-four years.

He died in the belief that he should one day publish an unique work on painting and painters: such was the aim of his existence, and his study must have been even more curious than the wonderfully crammed, small house at Islington, where William Upcott, the "Old Mortality" in his line, who saved from the housemaid's fire-lighting designs the MSS. of Evelyn's Life and Letters, which he found tossing about in the old gallery at Wotton, near Dorking, passed his days. Like Upcott, like Palissy, Vertue lived and died under the influence of one isolated aim, effort, and hope.

In these men, the cherished and amiable monomania of gifted minds was realized, Upcott had every possible autograph from every known hand in his collection: Palissy succeeded in making glazed china; but Vertue left his ore to the hands of others to work out into shape, and the man who moulded his crude

materials was Horace Walpole, and Vertue's forty volumes were shaped into a readable work, as curious and accurate in facts as it is flippant and prejudiced in style and opinions.

Walpole's "Anecdotes of Painting" are the foundation of all our small amount of knowledge as to what England has done formerly to encourage art.

One may fancy the modest, ingenious George Vertue arranging first, and then making a catalogue of the Houghton Gallery; Horace, a boy still, in looks,—with a somewhat chubby face, admiring and following; Sir Robert, in a cocked hat, edged with silver lace, a curled short wig, a loose coat, also edged with silver lace, and with a half humorous expression on his vulgar countenance, watching them at intervals, as they paraded through the hall, a large square space, adorned with bas-reliefs and busts, and containing a bronze copy of the Laocoon, for which Sir Robert (or rather we English) paid a thousand pounds; or they might be seen hopping speedily through the ground-floor apartments where there could be little to arrest the footsteps of the mediæval-minded Vertue. Who but a courtier could give one glance at a portrait of George I., though by Kneller? Who that *was* a courtier in that house would pause to look at the resemblance, also by Kneller, of the short-lived, ill-used Catherine Shorter, the Premier's first wife—even though he still endured it in his bed-room? a mute reproach for his neglect and misconduct. So let us hasten to the yel-

low dining-room, where presently we may admire the works of Titian, Guido, Vanderwerf, and last, not least, eleven portraits by Vandyck, of the Wharton family, which Sir Robert bought at the sale of the spendthrift Duke of Wharton.

Then let us glance at the saloon, famed for the four large "Market Pieces," as they were called, by Rubens and Snyders: let us lounge into what were called the Carlo Maratti and the Vandyck rooms; step we also into the green velvet bed-chamber, the tapestry-room, the worked bed-chamber; then comes another dining-room: in short, we are lost in wonder at this noble collection, which cost £40,000.

Many of the pictures were selected and bargained for by Vertue, who, in Flanders, purchased the Market Pieces referred to, for £428; but did not secure the "Fish Market," and the "Meat Market," by the same painter. In addition to the pictures, the stateliness and beauty of the rooms were enhanced by rich furniture, carving, gilding, and all the subsidiary arts which our grandfathers loved to add to high merit in design or coloring. Besides his purchases, Sir Robert received presents of pictures from friends and expectant courtiers; and the gallery at Houghton contained at last 222 pictures. To our sorrow now, to our disgrace then, this splendid collection was suffered to go out of the country: Catherine, empress of Russia, bought it for £40,000, and it adorns the Hermitage Palace of St. Petersburg.

After Sir Robert's retirement from power, the good qualities which he undoubtedly possessed, seemed to reappear as soon as the pressure of party feeling was withdrawn. He was fast declining in health when the insurrection of 1745 was impending. He had warned the country of its danger in his last speech, one of the finest ever made in the House of Lords: after that effort his voice was heard no more. The gallant, unfortunate Charles Edward was then in Paris, and that scope of old experience

> ——"which doth attain
> To somewhat of prophetic strain,"

showed the ex-minister of Great Britain that an invasion was at hand. It was on this occasion that Frederick, Prince of Wales, took Sir Robert, then Lord Orford, by the hand, and thanked him for his zeal in the cause of the royal family. Walpole returned to Norfolk, but was summoned again to London to afford the ministry the benefit of his counsels. Death, however, closed his prosperous, but laborious life. He suffered agonies from the stone; large doses of opium kept him in a state of stupor, and alone gave him ease; but his strength failed, and he was warned to prepare himself for his decease. He bore the announcement with great fortitude, and took leave of his children in perfect resignation to his doom. He died on the 28th of March, 1745.

Horace Walpole—whatsoever doubts may rest on the

fact of his being Lord Orford's son or not—writes feelingly and naturally upon this event, and its forerunner, the agonies of disease. He seems, from the following passages in his letters to Sir Horace Mann, to have devoted himself incessantly to the patient invalid: on his father having rallied, he thus expresses himself:—

"You have heard from your brother the reason of my not having written to you so long. I have been out but twice since my father fell into this illness, which is now near a month, and all that time either continually in his room, or obliged to see multitudes of people: for it is wonderful how everybody of all kinds has affected to express their concern for him! He has been out of danger this week; but I can't say he mended at all perceptibly till these last three days. His spirits are amazing, and his constitution more, for Dr. Hulse said honestly from the first, that if he recovered it would be from his own strength, not from their art. How much more," he adds, mournfully, "he will ever recover, one scarce dare hope about; for us, he is greatly recovered; for himself—" He then breaks off.

A month after we find him thus referring to the parent still throbbing in mortal agony on the deathbed, with no chance of amendment:—

"How dismal a prospect for him, with the possession of the greatest understanding in the world, not the least impaired, to lie without any use for it! for to keep him from pains and restlessness, he takes so much

opiate, that he is scarce awake four hours of the four-and-twenty; but I will say no more of this."

On the 29th of March, he again wrote to his friend in the following terms:—

"I begged your brothers to tell you what it is impossible for me to tell you. You share in our common loss! Don't expect me to enter at all upon the subject. After the melancholy two months that I have passed, and in my situation, you will not wonder I shun a conversation which could not be bounded by a letter, a letter that would grow into a panegyric or a piece of a moral; improper for me to write upon, and too distressful for us both! a death is only to be felt, never to be talked upon by those it touches."

Nevertheless, the world soon had Horace Walpole for her own again; during Lord Orford's last illness, George II. thought of him, it seems, even though the "Granvilles" were the only people tolerated at court. That famous *clique* comprised the secretly adored of Horace (Lady Granville now), Lady Sophia Fermor.

"The Granville faction," Horace wrote, before his father's death, "are still the constant and only countenanced people at court. Lord Winchelsea, one of the disgraced, played at court at Twelfth-night, and won: the king asked him next morning how much he had for his own share. He replied, 'Sir, about a quarter's salary.' I liked the spirit, and was talking to him of it the next night at Lord Granville's. 'Why yes,' said he, 'I think it showed familiarity at

least: tell it your father, I don't think he will dislike it.'"

The most trifling incidents divided the world of fashion and produced the bitterest rancor. Indeed, nothing could exceed the frivolity of the great, except their impertinence. For want of better amusements, it had become the fashion to make conundrums, and to have printed books full of them, which were produced at parties. But these were peaceful diversions. The following anecdote is worthy of the times of George II. and of Frederick of Wales:—

"There is a very good quarrel," Horace writes, "on foot, between two duchesses: she of Queensberry sent to invite Lady Emily Lenox to a ball: her grace of Richmond, who is wonderfully cautious since Lady Caroline's elopement (with Mr. Fox), sent word 'she could not determine.' The other sent again the same night: the same answer. The Queensberry then sent word, that she had made up her company, and desired to be excused from having Lady Emily's; but at the bottom of the card wrote, 'Too great trust.' There is no declaration of war come out from the other duchess: but I believe it will be made a national quarrel of the whole illegitimate royal family."

Her Grace of Queensberry, Prior's "Kitty, beautiful and young," lorded it, with a tyrannical hand, over the court. Her famed loveliness was, it is true, at this time on the wane. Her portrait delineating her in her bib and tucker, with her head rolled back underneath

a sort of half cap, half veil, shows how intellectual was the face to which such incense was paid for years. Her forehead and eyebrows are beautiful: her eyes soft, though lively in expression: her features refined. She was as whimsical in her attire as in her character. When, however, she chose to appear as the *grande dame*, no one could cope with her. Mrs. Delany describes her at the Birth-day,—her dress of white satin, embroidered with vine leaves, convolvuluses, rose-buds, shaded after nature; but she, says her friend, "was *so far* beyond the master-*piece of art* that one could hardly think of her clothes—allowing for her age I never saw so *beautiful a creature*."

Meantime, Houghton was shut up: for its owner died £50,000 in debt, and the elder brother of Horace, the second Lord Orford, proposed, on entering it again, after keeping it closed for some time, to enter upon "new, and then very unknown economy, for which there was great need:" thus Horace refers to the changes.

It was in the South Sea scheme that Sir Robert Walpole had realized a large sum of money, by selling out at the right moment. In doing so he had gained 1000 per cent. But he left little to his family, and at his death, Horace received a legacy only of £5000, and a thousand pounds yearly, which he was to draw (for doing nothing) from the collector's place in the Custom House; the surplus to be divided between his brother Edward and himself: this provision

was afterwards enhanced by some money which came to Horace and his brothers from his uncle Captain Shorter's property; but Horace was not at this period a rich man, and perhaps his not marrying was owing to his dislike of fortune-hunting, or to his dread of refusal.

Two years after his father's death, he took a small house at Twickenham: the property cost him nearly £14,000; in the deeds he found that it was called Strawberry Hill. He soon commenced making considerable additions to the house—which became a sort of raree-show in the latter part of the last, and until a late period in this, century.

Twickenham—so called, according to the antiquary Norden, because the Thames, as it flows near it, seems from the islands to be divided into two rivers,—had long been celebrated for its gardens, when Horace Walpole, the generalissimo of all bachelors, took Strawberry Hill. "Twicknam is as much as Twynam," declares Norden, "a place scytuate between two rivers." So fertile a locality could not be neglected by the monks of old, the great gardeners and tillers of land in ancient days; and the Manor of Twickenham was consequently given to the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury, by King Edred, in 491; who piously inserted his anathema against any person—whatever their rank, sex, or order—who should infringe the rights of these holy men. "May their memory," the king decreed, with a force worthy

of the excommunicator-wholesale, Pius IX., "be blotted out of the Book of Life; may their strength continually waste away, and be there no restorative to repair it!" nevertheless, there were in the time of Lysons, a hundred and fifty acres of fruit-gardens at Twickenham: the soil being a sandy loam, raspberries grew plentifully. Even so early as Queen Elizabeth's days, Bishop Corbet's father had a nursery garden at Twickenham,—so that King Edred's curse seems to have fallen as powerlessly as it may be hoped all subsequent maledictions may do.

In 1698, one of the Earl of Bradford's coachmen built a small house on a piece of ground, called in old works, Strawberry-Hill-Shot; lodgings were here let, and Colley Cibber became one of the occupants of the place, and here wrote his comedy called "Refusal; or the Ladies' Philosophy." The spot was so greatly admired that Talbot, Bishop of Durham, lived eight years in it, and the Marquis of Carnarvon succeeded him as a tenant: next came Mrs. Chenevix, a famous toywoman. She was probably a French woman, for Father Courayer—he who vainly endeavored to effect an union between the English and the Gallican churches—lodged here some time. Horace Walpole bought up Mrs. Chenevix's lease, and afterwards the fee-simple; and henceforth became the busiest, if not the happiest, man in a small way in existence.

We now despise the poor, over-ornate miniature Gothic style of Strawberry Hill; we do not consider

with what infinite pains the structure was enlarged into its final and well-known form. In the first place, Horace made a tour to collect models from the chief cathedral cities in England; but the building required twenty-three years to complete it. It was begun in 1753, and finished in 1776. Strawberry Hill had one merit, everything was in keeping: the internal decorations, the screens, the niches, the chimney-pieces, the book-shelves, were all Gothic; and most of these were designed by Horace himself; and, indeed, the description of Strawberry Hill is too closely connected with the annals of his life to be dissevered from his biography. Here he gathered up his mental forces to support and amuse himself during a long life, sometimes darkened by spleen, but rarely by solitude; for Horace, with much isolation of the heart, was, to the world, a social being.

What scandal, what trifles, what important events, what littleness of mind, yet what stretch of intellect were henceforth issued by the recluse of Strawberry, as he plumed himself on being styled, from that library of "Strawberry!" Let us picture to ourselves the place, the persons—put on, if we can, the sentiments and habits of the retreat; look through its loopholes, not only on the wide world beyond, but into the small world within; and face the fine gentleman author in every period of his varied life.

"The Strawberry Gazette," Horace once wrote to a fine and titled lady, "is very barren of weeds." Such,

however, was rarely the case. Peers, and still better, peeresses,—politicians, actors, actresses,—the poor poet who knew not where to dine, the Mæcenas who was "fed with dedications"—the belle of the season, the demirep of many, the antiquary, and the dilettanti, —painters, sculptors, engravers, all brought news to the "Strawberry Gazette;" and incense, sometimes wrung from aching hearts, to the fastidious wit who professed to be a judge of all material and immaterial things—from a Burlesque to an Essay on history or Philosophy—from the construction of Mrs. Chenevix's last new toy to the mechanism of a clock made in the sixteenth century, was lavished there.

Suppose that it is noon-day: Horace is showing a party of guests from London over Strawberry:—enter we with him, and let us stand in the great parlor before a portrait by Wright of the Minister to whom all courts bowed. "That is my father, Sir Robert, in profile," and a vulgar face in profile is always seen at its vulgarest; and the *nez-retroussé*, the coarse mouth, the double chin, are most forcibly exhibited in this limning by Wright; who did not, like Reynolds, or like Lawrence, cast a *nuance* of gentility over every subject of his pencil. Horace—can we not hear him in imagination?—is telling his friends how Sir Robert used to celebrate the day on which he sent in his resignation, as a fête; then he would point out to his visitors a Conversation-piece, one of Reynolds's earliest efforts in small life, representing the second

Earl of Edgecumbe, Selwyn, and Williams—all wits and beaux, and *habitués* of Strawberry. Colley Cibber, however, was put in cold marble in the anteroom; a respect very *Horatian*, for no man knew better how to rank his friends than the recluse of Strawberry. He hurries the lingering guests through the little parlor, the chimney-piece of which was copied from the tomb of Ruthall, Bishop of Durham, in Westminster Abbey. Yet how he pauses complacently to enumerate what has been done for him by titled belles: how these dogs, modelled in terra-cotta, are the production of Anne Damer; a water-color drawing by Agnes Berry; a landscape with gypsies by Lady Di Beauclerk; all platonically devoted to our Horace; but he dwells long, and his bright eyes are lighted up as he pauses before a case, looking as if it contained only a few apparently faded of no-one-knows-who (or by whom) miniatures; this is a collection of Peter Oliver's best works—portraits of the Digby family.

How sadly, in referring to these invaluable pictures, does one's mind revert to the day when, before the hammer of Robins had resounded in these rooms—before his transcendent eloquence had been heard at Strawberry—Agnes Strickland, followed by all eyes, pondered over that group of portraits: how, as she slowly withdrew, we of the commonalty, scarce worthy to look, gathered around the spot again, and wondered at the perfect life, the perfect coloring, proportion,

and keeping of those tiny vestiges of a bygone generation!

Then Horace—we fear it was not till his prime was past, and a touch of gout crippled his once active limbs—points to a picture of Rose, the gardener (well named), presenting Charles II. with a pine-apple. Some may murmur a doubt whether pine-apples were cultivated in cold Britain so long since. But Horace enforces the fact; "the likeness of the king," quoth he, "is too marked, and his features are too well known to doubt the fact;" and then he tells "how he had received a present the last Sunday of fruit—and from whom."

They pause next on Sir Peter Lely's portrait of Cowley—next on Hogarth's Sarah Malcolm, the murderess of her mistress; then—and doubtless, the spinster ladies are in fault here for the delay,—on Mrs. Damer's model of two kittens, pets, though, of Horace Walpole's—for he who loved few human beings was, after the fashion of bachelors, fond of cats.

They ascend the staircase: the domestic adornments merge into the historic. We have Francis I.—not himself, but his armor: the chimney-piece, too, is a copy from the tomb-works of John, Earl of Cornwall, in Westminster Abbey; the stone-work from that of Thomas, Duke of Clarence, at Canterbury.

Stay awhile: we have not done with sacrilege yet; worse things are to be told, and we walk with consciences not unscathed into the Library, disapproving

in secret but flattering vocally. Here the very spirit of Horace seemed to those who visited Strawberry before it falls to breathe in every corner. Alas! when we beheld that library, it was half filled with chests containing the celebrated MSS. of his letters; which were bought by that enterprising publisher of learned name, Richard Bentley, and which have since had adequate justice done them by first-rate editors. There they were: the "Strawberry Gazette" in full; —one glanced merely at the yellow paper, and clear, decisive hand, and then turned to see what objects he, who loved his books so well, collected for his especial gratification. Mrs. Damer again! how proud he was of her genius—her beauty, her cousinly love for himself; the wise way in which she bound up the wounds of her breaking heart when her profligate husband shot himself, by taking to occupation—perhaps, too, by liking cousin Horace indifferently well. He put her models forward in every place. Here was her Osprey Eagle in terra-cotta, a masterly production; there a *couvre-fire*, or *cur-few*, imitated and modelled by her. Then the marriage of Henry VI. figures on the wall: near the fire is a screen of the first tapestry ever made in England, representing a map of Surrey and Middlesex; a notion of utility combined with ornament, which we see still exhibited in the Sampler in old-fashioned, middle-class houses; that poor posthumous, base-born child of the tapestry, almost defunct itself; and a veritable piece of antiquity.

Still more remarkable in this room was a quaint-faced clock, silver gilt, given by Henry VIII. to Anne Boleyn; which perchance, after marking the moments of her festive life, struck unfeelingly the hour of her doom.

But the company are hurrying into the little anteroom, the ceiling of which is studded with stars in mosaic; it is therefore called, jocularly, the "Star Chamber;" and here stands a cast of the famous bust of Henry VII., by Torregiano, intended for the tomb of that sad-faced, long-visaged monarch, who always looks as if royalty had disagreed with him.

Next we enter the Holbein Chamber. Horace hated bishops and archbishops, and all the hierarchy; yet here again we behold another prelatical chimney-piece —a frieze taken from the tomb of Archbishop Warham, at Canterbury. And here, in addition to Holbein's picture of Mary Tudor, Duchess of Suffolk, and of her third husband Adrian Stokes, are Vertue's copies of Holbein, drawings of that great master's pictures in Buckingham House: enough—let us hasten into the Long Gallery. Those who remember Sir Samuel Meyrick and his Gallery at Goodrich Court will have traced in his curious, somewhat gewgaw collections of armor, antiquities, faded portraits and mock horses, much of the taste and turn of mind that existed in Horace Walpole.

The gallery, which all who recollect the sale at Strawberry Hill must remember with peculiar inter-

est, sounded well on paper. It was 56 feet long, 17 high, and 13 wide; yet was neither long enough, high enough, nor wide enough to inspire the indefinable sentiment by which we acknowledge vastness. We beheld it the scene of George Robins's triumphs—crowded to excess. Here strolled Lord John Russell; there, with heavy tread, walked Daniel O'Connell. Hallam, placid, kindly, gentle—the prince of bookworms—moved quickly through the rooms, pausing to raise a glance to the ceiling—copied from one of the side aisles of Henry VII.'s Chapel—but the fretwork is gilt, and there is a *petitesse* about the Gothic which disappoints all good judges.

But when Horace conducted his courtly guests into this his mind-vaunted vaulted gallery, he had sometimes George Selwyn at his side; or Gray—or, in his old age, "my niece, the Duchess of Gloucester," leaned on his arm. What strange associations, what brilliant company!—the associations can never be recalled there again; nor the company reassembled. The gallery, like everything else, has perished under the pressure of debt. He who was so particular, too, as to the number of those who were admitted to see his house—he who stipulated that four persons only should compose a party, and one party alone be shown over each day—how would he have borne the crisis, could he have foreseen it, when Robins became, for the time, his successor, and was the temporary lord of Strawberry; the dusty, ruthless, wondering, de-

preciating mob of brokers—the respectable host of publishers—the starving army of martyrs, the authors —the fine ladies, who saw nothing there comparable to Howell and James's—the antiquaries, fishing out suspicious antiquities—the painters, clamorous over Kneller's profile of Mrs. Barry—the virtuous indignant mothers, as they passed by the portraits of the Duchess de la Vallière and of Ninon de l'Enclos, and remarked, or at all events they *might* have remarked, that the company on the floor was scarcely much more respectable than the company on the walls—the fashionables, who herded together, impelled by caste, that free-masonry of social life, enter the Beauclerk closet to look over Lady Di's scenes from the "Mysterious Mother"—the players and dramatists, finally, who crowded round Hogarth's sketch of his "Beggars' Opera," with portraits, and gazed on Davison's likeness of Mrs. Clive:—how could poor Horace have tolerated the sound of their irreverent remarks, the dust of their shoes, the degradation of their fancying that they might doubt his spurious-looking antiquities, or condemn his improper-looking ladies on their canvas? How, indeed, could he? For those parlors, that library, were peopled in his days with all those who could enhance his pleasures, or add to their own, by their presence. When Poverty stole in there, it was irradiated by Genius. When painters hovered beneath the fretted ceiling of that library, it was to thank the oracle of the day, not always for large

orders, but for powerful recommendations. When actresses trod the Star Chamber, it was as modest friends, not as audacious critics on Horace, his house, and his pictures.

Before we call up the spirits that were familiar at Strawberry—ere we pass through the garden-gate, the piers of which were copied from the tomb of Bishop William de Luda, in Ely Cathedral—let us glance at the chapel, and then a word or two about Walpole's neighbors and anent Twickenham.

The front of the chapel was copied from Bishop Audley's tomb at Salisbury. Four panels of wood, taken from the Abbey of St. Edmund's Bury, displayed the portraits of Cardinal Beaufort, of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, and of Archbishop Kemp. So much for the English church.

Next was seen a magnificent shrine in mosaic, from the church of St. Mary Maggiore, in Rome. This was the work of the noted Peter Cavalini, who constructed the tomb of Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey. The shrine had figured over the sepulchre of four martyrs, who rested between it in 1257: then the principal window in the chapel was brought from Bexhill in Sussex, and displayed portraits of Henry III. and his queen.

It was not every day that gay visitors travelled down the dusty roads from London to visit the recluse at Strawberry: but Horace wanted them not, for he had neighbors. In his youth he had owned for his

playfellow the ever-witty, the precocious, the all-fascinating Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. "She was," he wrote, a "playfellow of mine when we were children. She was always a dirty little thing. This habit continued with her. When at Florence, the Grand Duke gave her apartments in his palace. One room sufficed for everything; and when she went away, the stench was so strong that they were obliged to fumigate the chamber with vinegar for a week."

Let not the scandal be implicitly credited. Lady Mary, dirty or clean, resided occasionally, however, at Twickenham. When the admirable Lysons composed his "Environs of London," Horace Walpole was still living—it was in 1795—to point out to him the house in which his brilliant acquaintance lived. It was then inhabited by Dr. Morton. The profligate and clever Duke of Wharton lived also at Twickenham.

Marble Hill was built by George II. for the countess of Suffolk, and Henry, Earl of Pembroke, was the architect. Of later years, the beautiful and injured Mrs. Fitzherbert might be seen traversing the greensward, which was laved by the then pellucid waters of the Thames. The parish of Twickenham, in fact, was noted for the numerous characters who have, at various times, lived in it: Robert Boyle, the great philosopher; James Craggs, Secretary of State; Lord George Germaine; Lord Bute—are strangely mixed up with the old memories which circle around Twickenham, to say

nothing of its being, in after years, the abode of Louis Philippe, and now, of his accomplished son.

One dark figure in the background of society haunts us also: Lady Macclesfield, the cruel mother of Savage, polluted Twickenham by her evil presence.

Let us not dwell on her name, but recall, with somewhat of pride, that the names of that knot of accomplished, intellectual women, who composed the neighborhood of Strawberry, were all English; those who loved to revel in all its charms of society and intellect were our justly-prized countrywomen.

Foremost in the bright constellation was Anne Seymour Conway, too soon married to the Hon. John Damer. She was one of the loveliest, the most enterprising, and the most gifted women of her time—thirty-one years younger than Horace, having been born in 1748. He doubtless liked her the more that no ridicule could attach to his partiality, which was that of a father to a daughter, in so far as regarded his young cousin. She belonged to a family dear to him, being the daughter of Field Marshal Henry Seymour Conway: then she was beautiful, witty, a courageous politician, a heroine, fearless of losing caste, by aspiring to be an artist. She was, in truth, of our own time rather than of that. The works which she left at Strawberry are scattered; and if still traceable, are probably in many instances scarcely valued. But in that lovely spot, hallowed by the remembrance of Mrs. Siddons, who lived there in some humble capacity

—say maid, say companion—in Guy's Cliff House, near Warwick—noble traces of Anne Damer's genius are extant: busts of the majestic Sally Siddons; of Nature's aristocrat, John Kemble; of his brother Charles —arrest many a look, call up many a thought of Anne Damer and her gifts: her intelligence, her warmth of heart, her beauty, her associates. Of her powers Horace Walpole had the highest opinion. "If they come to Florence," he wrote, speaking of Mrs. Damer's going to Italy for the winter, "the great duke should beg Mrs. Damer to give him something of her statuary; and it would be a greater curiosity than anything in his Chamber of Painters. She has executed several marvels since you saw her; and has lately carved two collossal heads for the bridge at Henley, which is the most beautiful in the world, next to the Ponte di Trinità, and was principally designed by her father, General Conway."

No wonder that he left to this accomplished relative the privilege of living, after his death, at Strawberry Hill, of which she took possession in 1797, and where she remained twenty years; giving it up, in 1828, to Lord Waldegrave.

She was, as we have said, before her time in her appreciation of what was noble and superior, in preference to that which gives to caste alone, its supremacy. During her last years she bravely espoused an unfashionable cause; and disregarding the contempt of the

lofty, became the champion of the injured and unhappy Caroline of Brunswick.

From his retreat at Strawberry, Horace Walpole heard all that befell the object of his flame, Lady Sophia Fermor. His letters present from time to time such passages as these; Lady Pomfret, whom he detested, being always the object of his satire:—

"There is not the least news; but that my Lord Carteret's wedding has been deferred on Lady Sophia's (Fermor's) falling dangerously ill of a scarlet fever; but they say it is to be next Saturday. She is to have £1600 a year jointure, £400 pin-money, and £2000 of jewels. Carteret says he does not intend to marry the mother (Lady Pomfret) and the whole family. What do you think my Lady intends?"

Lord Carteret, who was the object of Lady Pomfret's successful generalship, was at this period, 1744, fifty-four years of age, having been born in 1690. He was the son of George, Lord Carteret, by Grace, daughter of the first Earl of Bath, of the line of Granville—a title which became eventually his. The fair Sophia, in marrying him, espoused a man of no ordinary attributes. In person, Horace Walpole, after the grave had closed over one whom he probably envied, thus describes him:—

"Commanding beauty, smoothed by cheerful grace,
Sat on each open feature of his face.
Bold was his language, rapid, glowing, strong,
And science flowed spontaneous from his tongue:

> A genius seizing systems, slighting rules,
> And void of gall, with boundless scorn of fools."

After having been Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Carteret attended his royal master in the campaign during which the Battle of Dettingen was fought. He now held the reins of government in his own hands as premier. Lord Chesterfield has described him as possessing quick precision, nice decision, and unbounded presumption. The Duke of Newcastle used to say of him that he was a "man who never doubted."

In a subsequent letter we find the sacrifice of the young and lovely Sophia completed. Ambition was the characteristic of her family: and she went, not unwillingly, to the altar. The whole affair is too amusingly told to be given in other language than that of Horace:—

"I could tell you a great deal of news," he writes to Horace Mann, "but it would not be what you would expect. It is not of battles, sieges, and declarations of war; nor of invasions, insurrections and addresses: it is the god of love, not he of war, who reigns in the newspapers. The town has made up a list of six-and-thirty weddings, which I shall not catalogue to you. But the chief entertainment has been the nuptials of our great Quixote (Carteret) and the fair Sophia. On the point of matrimony, she fell ill of a scarlet fever, and was given over, while he had the gout, but heroically sent her word, that if she was well, he *would* be well. They corresponded every day, and he used to

plague the cabinet council with reading her letters to them. Last night they were married; and as all he does must have a particular air in it, they supped at Lord Pomfret's. At twelve, Lady Granville (his mother) and all his family went to bed, but the porter: then my lord went home, and waited for her in the lodge. She came alone, in a hackney chair, met him in the hall, and was led up the back stairs to bed. What is ridiculously lucky is, that Lord Lincoln goes into waiting to-day, and will be to present her!"

The event was succeeded by a great ball at the Duchess of Richmond's, in honor of the bride, Lady Carteret paying her ladyship the "highest honors," which she received in the "highest state." "I have seen her," adds Horace, "but once, and found her just what I expected, *très grande dame*, full of herself, and yet not with an air of happiness. She looks ill, and is grown lean, but is still the finest figure in the world. The mother (Lady Pomfret) is not so exalted as I expected; I fancy Carteret has kept his resolution, and does not marry her too."

Whilst this game was being played out, one of Walpole's most valued neighbors, Pope, was dying of dropsy, and every evening a gentle delirium possessed him. Again does Horace return to the theme, ever in his thoughts—the Carterets: again does he recount their triumphs and their follies.

"I will not fail"—still to Horace Mann—"to make your compliments to the Pomfrets and Carterets. I

see them seldom, but I am in favor; so I conclude, for my Lady Pomfret told me the other night that I said better things than anybody. I was with them all at a subscription ball at Ranelagh last week, which my Lady Carteret though proper to look upon as given to her, and thanked the gentlemen, who were not quite so well pleased at her condescending to take it to herself. I did the honors of all her dress. 'How charming your ladyship's cross is! I am sure the design was your own!'—'No, indeed; my lord sent it to me just as it is.' Then as much to the mother. Do you wonder I say better things than anybody?"

But these brilliant scenes were soon mournfully ended. Lady Sophia, the haughty, the idolized, the Juno of that gay circle, was suddenly carried off by a fever. With real feeling Horace thus tells the tale:—

"Before I talk of any public news, I must tell you what you will be very sorry for. Lady Granville (Lady Sophia Fermor) is dead. She had a fever for six weeks before her lying-in, and could never get it off. Last Saturday they called in another physician, Dr. Oliver. On Monday he pronounced her out of danger; about seven in the evening, as Lady Pomfret and Lady Charlotte (Fermor) were sitting by her, the first notice they had of her immediate danger was her sighing and saying, 'I feel death come very fast upon me!' She repeated the same words frequently, remained perfectly in her senses and calm, and died about

eleven at night. It is very shocking for anybody so young, so handsome, so arrived at the height of happiness, to be so quickly snatched away."

So vanished one of the brightest stars of the court. The same autumn (1745) was the epoch of a great event; the marching of Charles Edward into England. Whilst the Duke of Cumberland was preparing to head the troops to oppose him, the Prince of Wales was inviting a party to supper, the main feature of which was the citadel of Carlisle in sugar, the company all besieging it with sugar-plums. It would, indeed, as Walpole declared, be impossible to relate all the *Caligulisms* of this effeminate, absurd prince. But buffoonery and eccentricity were the order of the day. "A ridiculous thing happened," Horace writes, "when the princess saw company after her confinement. The new-born babe was shown in a mighty pretty cradle, designed by Kent, under a canopy in the great drawing-room. Sir William Stanhope went to look at it. Mrs. Herbert, the governess, advanced to unmantle it. He said, 'In wax, I suppose?'—'Sir?'—'In wax, madam?'—'The young prince, sir?'—'Yes, in wax, I suppose?' This is his odd humor. When he went to see the duke at his birth, he said, 'Lord, it sees!'"

The recluse of Strawberry was soon consoled by hearing that the rebels were driven back from Derby, where they had penetrated, and where the remembrance of the then gay, sanguine, brave young Chevalier long lingered among the old inhabitants. One of the last

traces of his short-lived possession of the town is gone: very recently, Exeter House, where he lodged and where he received his adherents, has been pulled down; the ground on which it stood, with its court and garden—somewhat in appearance like an old French hotel—being too valuable for the relic of bygone times to be spared. The panelled chambers, the fine staircase, certain pictures—one by Wright of Derby, of him—one of Miss Walkinshaw—have all disappeared.

Of the capture, the trial, the death of his adherents, Horace Walpole has left the most graphic and therefore touching account that has been given; whilst he calls a "rebellion on the defensive" a "despicable affair." Humane, he reverted with horror to the atrocities of General Hawley, "the Chief Justice," as he was designated, who had a "passion for frequent and sudden executions." When this savage commander gained intelligence of a French spy coming over, he displayed him at once before the army on a gallows, dangling in his muff and boots. When one of the surgeons begged for the body of a deserter to dissect, "Well," said the wretch, "but you must let me have the skeleton to hang up in the guard-room." Such was the temper of the times; vice, childishness, levity at court, brutality in the camp, were the order of the day. Horace, even Horace, worldly in all, indifferent as to good and bad, seems to have been heart-sick. His brother's matrimonial infidelity vexed him

sorely. Lady Orford, "tired," as she expresses it, of "sublunary affairs," was trying to come to an arrangement with her husband, from whom she had been long separated; the price was to be, he fancied, £2000 a year. Meantime, during the convulsive state of political affairs, he interested himself continually in the improvement of Strawberry Hill. There was a rival building, Mr. Bateman's Monastery, at Old Windsor, which is said to have had more uniformity of design than Strawberry Hill. Horace used indeed to call the house of which he became so proud a paper house; the walls were at first so slight, and the roof so insecure in heavy rains. Nevertheless, his days were passed as peacefully there as the premature infirmities which came upon him would permit.

From the age of twenty-five his fingers were enlarged and deformed by chalk-stones, which were discharged twice a year. "I can chalk up a score with more rapidity than any man in England," was his melancholy jest. He had now adopted as a necessity a strict temperance: he sat up very late, either in writing or conversing, yet always breakfasted at nine o'clock. After the death of Madame du Deffand, a little fat dog, scarcely able to move for age and size—her legacy—used to proclaim his approach by barking. The little favorite was placed beside him on a sofa; a tea-kettle, stand, and heater were brought in, and he drank two or three cups of tea out of the finest and most precious china of Japan—that of a pure white.

He breakfasted with an appetite, feeding from his table the little dog and his pet squirrels.

Dinner at Strawberry Hill was usually served up in the small parlor in winter, the large dining-room being reserved for large parties. As age drew on, he was supported down stairs by his valet; and then, says the compiler of Walpoliana, "he ate most moderately of chicken, pheasant, or any light food. Pastry he disliked, as difficult of digestion, though he would taste a morsel of venison-pie. Never but once, that he drank two glasses of white wine, did the editor see him taste any liquor, except iced-water. A pail of ice was placed under the table, in which stood a decanter of water, from which he supplied himself with his favorite beverage."

No wine was drunk after dinner, when the host of Strawberry Hill called instantly to some one to ring the bell for coffee. It was served upstairs, and there, adds the same writer, "he would pass about five o'clock, and generally resuming his place on the sofa, would sit till two in the morning, in miscellaneous chit-chat, full of singular anecdotes, strokes of wit, and acute observations, occasionally sending for books, or curiosities, or passing to the library, as any reference happened to arise in conversation. After his coffee, he tasted nothing; but the snuff-box of *tabac d'etrennes*, from Fribourg's, was not forgotten, and was replenished from a canister lodged in an ancient marble urn of great thickness, which stood in the window

seat, and served to secure its moisture and rich flavor."

In spite of all his infirmities, Horace Walpole took no care of his health, as far as out-door exercise was concerned. His friends beheld him with horror go out on a dewy day: he would even step out in his slippers. In his own grounds he never wore a hat: he used to say, that on his first visit to Paris he was ashamed of his effeminacy, when he saw every meagre little Frenchman whom he could have knocked down in a breath walking without a hat, which he could not do without a certainty of taking the disease which the Germans say is endemical in England, and which they call *to catch cold*. The first trial, he used to tell his friends, cost him a fever, but he got over it. Draughts of air, damp rooms, windows open at his back, became matters of indifference to him after once getting through the hardening process. He used even to be vexed at the officious solicitude of friends on this point, and with half a smile would say, "My back is the same as my face, and my neck is like my nose." He regarded his favorite iced-water as a preservative to his stomach, which, he said, would last longer than his bones. He did not take into account that the stomach is usually the seat of disease.

One naturally inquires why the amiable recluse never, in his best days, thought of marriage: a difficult question to be answered. In men of that period, a dissolute life, an unhappy connection, too frequently

explained the problem. In the case before us no such explanation can be offered. Horace Walpole had many votaries, many friends, several favorites, but no known mistress. The marks of the old bachelor fastened early on him, more especially after he began to be governed by his *valet de chambre*. The notable personage who ruled over the pliant Horace was a Swiss, named Colomb. This domestic tyrant was despotic; if Horace wanted a tree to be felled, Colomb opposed it, and the master yielded. Servants, in those days, were intrinsically the same as in ours, but they differed in manner. The old familiarity had not gone out, but existed as it still does among the French. Those who recollect Dr. Parr will remember how stern a rule his factotum Sam exercised over him. Sam put down what wine he chose, nay, almost invited the guests; at all events he had his favorites among them. And in the same way as Sam ruled at Hatton, Colomb was, *de facto*, the master of Strawberry Hill.

With all its defects, the little "plaything house" as Horace Walpole called it, must have been a charming house to visit in. First, there was the host. "His engaging manners," writes the editor of Walpoliana, "and gentle, endearing affability to his friends, exceed all praise. Not the smallest hauteur, or consciousness of rank or talent, appeared in his familiar conferences; and he was ever eager to dissipate any constraint that might occur, as imposing a constraint upon himself,

and knowing that any such chain enfeebles and almost annihilates the mental powers. Endued with exquisite sensibility, his wit never gave the smallest wound, even to the grossest ignorance of the world or the most morbid hypochondriac bashfulness."

He had, in fact, no excuse for being doleful or morbid. How many resources were his! what an even destiny! what prosperous fortunes! what learned luxury he revelled in! he was enabled to "pick up all the roses of science, and to leave the thorns behind." To how few of the gifted have the means of gratification been permitted! to how many has hard work been allotted! Then, when genius has been endowed with rank, with wealth, how often has it been degraded by excess! Rochester's passions ran riot in one century: Beckford's gifts were polluted by his vices in another —signal landmarks of each age. But Horace Walpole was prudent, decorous, even respectable: no elevated aspirations, no benevolent views ennobled under the *petitesse* of his nature. He had neither genius nor romance: he was even devoid of sentiment; but he was social to all, neighborly to many, and attached to some of his fellow-creatures.

The "prettiest bauble" possible, as he called Strawberry Hill, "set in enamelled meadows in filigree hedges," was surrounded by "dowagers as plenty as flounders;" such was Walpole's assertion. As he sat in his library, scented by caraway, heliotropes, or pots of tuberose, or orange-trees in flower, certain dames

would look in upon him, sometimes *malgrê lui;* sometimes to his bachelor heart's content.

"Thank God!" he wrote to his cousin Conway, "the Thames is between me and the Duchess of Queensberry!" Walpole's dislike to his fair neighbor may partly have originated in the circumstances of her birth, and her grace's presuming to plume herself on what he deemed an unimportant distinction. Catherine Hyde, Duchess of Queensberry, was the great-granddaughter of the famous Lord Clarendon and the great-niece of Anne, Duchess of York. Prior had in her youth celebrated her in the "Female Phaëton," as "Kitty:" in his verse he begs Phaëton to give Kitty the chariot, if but for a day.

In reference to this, Horace Walpole, in the days of his admiration of her grace, had made the following impromptu:—

"On seeing the Duchess of Queensberry walk at the funeral of the Princess Dowager of Wales,—

> "To many a Kitty, Love his ear
> Would for a day engage;
> But Prior's Kitty, ever fair,
> Obtained it for an age."

It was Kitty who took Gay under her patronage, who resented the prohibition of the "Beggars' Opera," remonstrated with the king and queen, and was thereupon forbidden the court. She carried the poet to her house. She may have been ridiculous, but she had a

warm, generous heart. "I am now," Gay wrote to Swift in 1729, "in the Duke of Queensberry's house, and have been so ever since I left Hampstead; where I was carried at a time that it was thought I could not live a day. I must acquaint you (because I know it will please you) that during my sickness I had many of the kindest proofs of friendship, particularly from the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry; who, if I had been their nearest relation and dearest friend, could not have treated me with more constant attendance then, and they continue the same to me now."

The duchess appears to have been one of those wilful, eccentric spoiled children, whom the world at once worships and ridicules: next to the Countess of Pomfret, she was Horace Walpole's pet aversion. She was well described as being "very clever, very whimsical, and just not mad." Some of Walpole's touches are strongly confirmatory of this description. For instance, her grace gives a ball, orders every one to come at six, to sup at twelve, and to go away directly after: opens the ball herself with a minuet. To this ball she sends strange invitations; "yet," says Horace, "except these flights, the only extraordinary thing the duchess did was to do nothing extraordinary, for I do not call it very mad that, some pique happening between her and the Duchess of Bedford, the latter had this distich sent to her:—

'Come with a whistle—come with a call:
Come with good-will, or come not at all.'

I do not know whether what I am going to tell you did not border a little upon Moorfields. The gallery where they danced was very cold. Lord Lorn, George Selwyn, and I retired into a little room, and sat comfortably by the fire. The duchess looked in, said nothing, and sent a smith to take the hinges of the door off. We understood the hint—left the room—and so did the smith the door."

"I must tell you," he adds in another letter, "of an admirable reply of your acquaintance, the Duchess of Queensberry: old Lady Granville, Lord Carteret's mother, whom they call *the queen-mother*, from taking upon her to do the honors of her son's power, was pressing the duchess to ask her for some place for herself or friends, and assured her that she would procure it, be it what it would. Could she have picked out a fitter person to be gracious to? The duchess made her a most grave curtsey, and said, 'Indeed, there was one thing she had set her heart on.'—'Dear child, how you oblige me by asking anything! What is it? Tell me.'—'Only that you would speak to my Lord Carteret to get me made lady of the bedchamber to the Queen of Hungary.'"

The duchess was, therefore one of the dowagers, "thick as flounders," whose proximity was irritating to the fastidious bachelor. There was, however, another Kitty between whom and Horace a tender friendship subsisted: this was Kitty Clive, the famous actress; formerly Kitty Ruftar. Horace had given her a house

on his estate, which he called sometimes "Little Strawberry Hill," and sometimes "Cliveden;" and here Mrs. Clive lived with her brother, Mr. Ruftar, until 1785. She formed, for her friend, a sort of outer-home, in which he passed his evenings. Long had he admired her talents. Those were the days of the drama in all its glory: the opera was unfashionable. There were, Horace writes in 1742, on the 26th of May, only two-and-forty people in the Opera House, in the pit and boxes: people were running to see "Miss Lucy in Town," at Drury Lane, and to admire Mrs. Clive, in her imitation of the Muscovites; but the greatest crowds assembled to wonder at Garrick, in "Wine Merchant turned Player;" and great and small alike rushed to Goodman's Fields to see him act all parts, and to laugh at his admirable mimicry. It was perhaps, somewhat in jealousy of the counter-attraction, that Horace declared he saw nothing wonderful in the acting of Garrick, though it was then heresy to say so. "Now I talk of players," he adds in the same letter, "tell Mr. Chute that his friend Bracegirdle breakfasted with me this morning." Horace delighted in such intimacies, and in recalling old times.

Mrs. Abingdon, another charming and clever actress, was also a denizen of Twickenham, which became the most fashionable village near the metropolis. Mrs. Pritchard, likewise, was attracted there: but the proximity of the Countess of Suffolk, who lived at Marble Hill, was the delight of a great portion of

Horace Walpole's life. Her reminiscences, her anecdotes, her experience, were valuable as well as entertaining to one who was for ever gathering up materials for history, or for biography, or for letters to absent friends.

In his own family he found little to cheer him: but if he hated one or two more especially—and no one could hate more intensely than Horace Walpole—it was his uncle, Lord Walpole, and his cousin, that nobleman's son, whom he christened Pigwiggin; "my monstrous uncle;" "that old buffoon, my uncle;" are terms which occur in his letters, and he speaks of the bloody civil wars between "Horatio Walpole" and "Horace Walpole."

Horatio Walpole, the brother of Sir Robert, was created in June, 1756, Baron Walpole of Wolterton, as a recompense for fifty years passed in the public service—an honor which he only survived nine months. He expired in February, 1757. His death removed one subject of bitter dislike from the mind of Horace; but enough remained in the family to excite grief and resentment.

Towards his own two brothers, Robert, Earl of Orford, and Edward Walpole, Horace the younger, as he was styled in contradistinction to his uncle, bore very little affection. His feelings, however, for his nephew George, who succeeded his father as Earl of Orford in 1751, were more creditable to his heart; yet he gives a description of this ill-fated young man in his letters,

which shows at once pride and disapprobation. One lingers with regret over the character and the destiny of this fine young nobleman, whose existence was rendered miserable by frequent attacks, at intervals, of insanity.

Never was there a handsomer, a more popular, a more engaging being than George, third Earl of Orford. When he appeared at the head of the Norfolk regiment of militia, of which he was colonel, even the great Lord Chatham broke out into enthusiasm:—"Nothing," he wrote, "could make a better appearance than the two Norfolk battalions; Lord Orford, with the front of Mars himself, and really the greatest figure under arms I ever saw, was the theme of every tongue."

His person and air, Horace Walpole declared, had a noble wildness in them: crowds followed the battalions when the king reviewed them in Hyde Park; and among the gay young officers in their scarlet uniforms, faced with black, in their buff waistcoats and gold buttons, none was so conspicuous for martial bearing as Lord Orford, although classed by his uncle "among the knights of the shire who had never in their lives shot anything but woodcocks."

But there was a peculiarity of character in the young peer which shocked Horace. "No man," he says in one of his letters, "ever felt such a disposition to love another as I did to love him. I flattered myself that he would restore some lustre to our house—at least not

let it totally sink; but I am forced to give him up, and all my Walpole views. . . . . He has a good breeding, and attention when he is with you that is even flattering; . . . . he promises, offers everything one can wish; but this is all: the instant he leaves you, all the world are nothing to him; he would not give himself the least trouble in the world to give any one satisfaction; yet this is mere indolence of mind, not of body: his whole pleasure is outrageous exercise."

"He is," in another place Horace adds, "the most selfish man in the world: without being in the least interested, he loves nobody but himself, yet neglects every view of fortune and ambition. Yet," he concludes, "it is impossible not to love him when one sees him: impossible to esteem him when one thinks on him."

The young lord, succeeding to an estate deeply encumbered, both by his father and grandfather, rushed on the turf, and involved himself still more. In vain did Horace the younger endeavor to secure for him the hand of Miss Nicholls, an heiress with £50,000, and, to that end, placed the young lady with Horace the elder (Lord Walpole), at Wolterton. The scheme failed: the crafty old politician thought he might as well benefit his own sons as his nephew, for he had himself claims on the Houghton estate which he expected Miss Nicholls's fortune might help to liquidate.

At length the insanity and recklessness displayed

by his nephew—the handsome martial-George—induced poor Horace to take affairs in his own hands. His reflections, on his paying a visit to Houghton to look after the property there, are pathetically expressed:—

"Here I am again at Houghton," he writes in March, 1761, "and alone; in this spot where (except two hours last month) I have not been in sixteen years. Think what a crowd of reflections! . . . Here I am probably for the last time of my life: every clock that strikes, tells me I am an hour nearer to yonder church —that church into which I have not yet had courage to enter; where lies that mother on whom I doated, and who doated on me! There are the two rival mistresses of Houghton, neither of whom ever wished to enjoy it. There, too, is he who founded its greatness—to contribute to whose fall Europe was embroiled; there he sleeps in quiet and dignity, while his friend and his foe—rather his false ally and real enemy—Newcastle and Bath, are exhausting the dregs of their pitiful lives in squabbles and pamphlets."

When he looked at the pictures—that famous Houghton collection—the surprise of Horace was excessive. Accustomed to see nothing elsewhere but daubs, he gazed with ecstasy on them. "The majesty of Italian ideas," he says, "almost sinks before the warm nature of Italian coloring! Alas! don't I grow old?"

As he lingered in the gallery, with mingled pride

and sadness, a party arrived to see the house—a man and three women in riding-dresses—who "rode post" through the apartments. "I could not," he adds, "hurry before them fast enough; they were not so long in seeing the whole gallery as I could have been in one room, to examine what I knew by heart. I remember formerly being often diverted with this kind of *seers;* they come, ask what such a room is called in which Sir Robert lay, write it down, admire a lobster or a cabbage in a Market Piece, dispute whether the last room was green or purple, and then hurry to the inn, for fear the fish should be over-dressed. How different my sensations! not a picture here but recalls a history; not one but I remembered in Downing Street or Chelsea, where queens and crowds admired them, though seeing them as little as these travellers!"[1]

After tea he strolled into the garden. They told him it was now called a *pleasure-ground.* To Horace it was a scene of desolation—a floral Nineveh. "What a dissonant idea of pleasure!—those groves, those *allées*, where I have passed so many charming moments, were now stripped up or overgrown—many fond paths I could not unravel, though with an exact clue in my memory. I met two gamekeepers, and a thousand hares! In the days when all my soul was turned to pleasure and vivacity (and you will think perhaps it is

[1] Sir Robert Walpole purchased a house and garden at Chelsea in 1722, near the college, adjoining Gough House.—Cunningham's "London."

far from being out of tune yet), I hated Houghton and its solitude; yet I loved this garden, as now, with many regrets, I love Houghton—Houghton, I know not what to call it—a monument of grandeur or ruin!"

Although he did not go with the expectation of finding a land flowing with milk and honey, the sight of all this ruin long saddened his thoughts. All was confusion, disorder, debts, mortgages, sales, pillage, villainy, waste, folly, and madness. The nettles and brambles in the park were up to his shoulders; horses had been turned into the garden, and banditti lodged in every cottage.

The perpetuity of livings that came up to the very park-palings had been sold, and the farms let at half their value. Certainly, if Houghton were bought by Sir Robert Walpole with public money, that public was now avenged.

The owner of this ruined property had just stemmed the torrent; but the worst was to come. The pictures were sold, and to Russia they went.

Whilst thus harassed by family misfortunes, other annoyances came. The mournful story of Chatterton's fate was painfully mixed up with the tenor of Horace Walpole's life.

The gifted and unfortunate Thomas Chatterton was born at Bristol in 1752. Even from his birth fate seemed to pursue him, for he was a posthumous son: and if the loss of a father in the highest ranks of life

be severely felt, how much more so is it to be deplored in those which are termed the working classes!

The friendless enthusiast was slow in learning to read; but when the illuminated capitals of an old book were presented to him, he quickly learned his letters. This fact, and his being taught to read out of a black-letter Bible, are said to have accounted for his facility in the imitation of antiquities.

Pensive and taciturn, he picked up education at a charity-school, until apprenticed to a scrivener, when he began that battle of life which ended to him so fatally.

Upon very slight accidents did his destiny hinge. In those days women worked with thread, and used thread-papers. Now paper was, at that time, dear: dainty matrons liked tasty thread-papers. A pretty set of thread-papers, with birds or flowers painted on each, was no mean present for a friend. Chatterton, a quiet child, one day noticed that his mother's thread-papers were of no ordinary materials. They were made of parchment, and on this parchment were some of the black-letter characters by which his childish attention had been fixed to his book. The fact was, that his uncle was sexton to the ancient church of St. Mary Redcliffe, at Bristol; and the parchment was the fruit of theft. Chatterton's father had carried off, from a room in the church, certain ancient manuscripts, which had been left about; being originally abstracted from what was called Mr. Canynge's coffin. Mr. Canynge, an eminent merchant,

had rebuilt St. Mary Redcliffe in the reign of Edward IV.: and the parchments, therefore, were of some antiquity. The antiquary groans over their loss in vain: Chatterton's father had covered his books with them; his mother had used up the strips for thread-papers; and Thomas Chatterton himself contrived to abstract a considerable portion also for his own purposes.

He was ingenious, industrious, a poet by nature, and, wonderful to say, withal a herald by taste. Upon his nefarious possessions he founded a scheme of literary forgeries; purporting to be ancient pieces of poetry found in Canynge's chest; and described as being the production of Thomas Canynge and of his friend, one Thomas Rowley, a priest. Money and books were sent to Chatterton in return for little strips of vellum, which he passed off as the original itself; and the successful forger might now be seen in deep thought, walking in the meadows near Redcliffe; a marked, admired, poetic youth.

In 1769, Chatterton wrote to Horace Walpole, offering to send him some accounts of eminent painters who had flourished at Bristol, and at the same time mentioning the discovery of the poems, and enclosing some specimens. In a subsequent letter he begged Walpole to aid him in his wish to be freed from his then servile condition, and to be placed in one more congenial to his pursuits.

In his choice of a patron poor Chatterton made a

fatal mistake. The benevolence of Horace was of a general kind, and never descended to anything obscure or unappreciated. There was a certain hardness in that nature of his which had so pleasant an aspect. "An artist," he once said, "has his pencils—an author his pens—and the public must reward them as it pleases." Alas! he forgot how long it is before penury, even ennobled by genius, can make itself seen, heard, approved, repaid: how vast is the influence of *prestige!* how generous the hand which is extended to those in want, even if in error! All that Horace did, however, was strictly correct: he showed the poems to Gray and Mason, who pronounced them fergeries; and he wrote a cold and reproving letter to the starving author: and no one could blame him. Chatterton demanded back his poems; Walpole was going to Paris, and forgot to return them. Another letter came: the wounded poet again demanded them, adding that Walpole would not have dared to use him so had he not been poor. The poems were returned in a blank cover: and here all Walpole's concern with Thomas Chatterton ends. All this happened in 1769. In August, 1770, the remains of the unhappy youth were carried to the burial-ground of Shoe Lane workhouse, near Holborn. He had swallowed arsenic; had lingered a day in agonies; and then, at the age of eighteen, expired. Starvation had prompted the act: yet on the day before he had committed it, he had refused a dinner, of which he was in-

vited by his hostess to partake, assuring her that he was not hungry. Just or unjust, the world has never forgiven Horace Walpole for Chatterton's misery. His indifference has been contrasted with the generosity of Edmund Burke to Crabbe: a generosity to which we owe "The Village," "The Borough," and to which Crabbe owed his peaceful old age, and almost his existence. The cases were different; but Crabbe had his faults—and Chatterton was worth saving. It is well for genius that there are souls in the world more sympathizing, less worldly and more indulgent, than those of such men as Horace Walpole. Even the editor of "Walpoliana" lets judgment go by default. "As to artists," he says, "he paid them what they earned, and he commonly employed mean ones, that the reward might be smaller."

Let us change the strain: stilled be the mournful note on which we have rested too long. What have wits and beaux and men of society to do with poets and beggars? Behold, Horace, when he has written his monitory letter, packs up for Paris. Let us follow him there, and see him in the very centre of his pleasures—in the *salon* of La Marquise du Deffand.

Horace Walpole had perfected his education, as a fine gentleman, by his intimacy with Madame Geoffrin, to whom Lady Hervey had introduced him. She called him *le nouveau Richelieu;* and Horace was sensible of so great a compliment from a woman at once "*spirituelle* and *pieuse*"—a combination rare in

France. Nevertheless, she had the national views of matrimony. "What have you done, Madame," said a foreigner to her, "with the poor man I used to see here, who never spoke a word?"

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" was the reply, "that was my husband: he is dead." She spoke in the same tone as if she had been specifying the last new opera, or referring to the latest work in vogue: things just passed away.

The *Marquise du Deffand* was a very different personage to Madame Geoffrin, whose great enemy she was. When Horace Walpole first entered into the society of the Marquise, she was stone blind, and old; but retained not only her wit and her memory, but her passions. Passions, like artificial flowers, are unbecoming to age: and those of the witty, atheistical Marquise are almost revolting. Scandal still attached her name to that of Hénault, of whom Voltaire wrote the epitaph beginning

> "Hénault, fameus par vos soupers
> Et votre 'chronologie,'" etc.

Hénault was for many years deaf; and, during the whole of his life, disagreeable. There was something farcical in the old man's receptions on his death-bed; whilst, amongst the rest of the company came Madame du Deffand, a blind old woman of seventy, who, bawling in his ear, aroused the lethargic man, by inquiring after a former rival of hers, Madame de Castelmaron—

about whom he went on babbling until death stopped his voice.

She was seventy years of age when Horace Walpole, at fifty, became her passion. She was poor and disreputable, and even the high position of having been mistress to the regent could not save her from being decried by a large portion of that society which centred round the *bel esprit*. "She was," observes the biographer of Horace Walpole (the lamented author of the "Crescent and the Cross"), "always gay, always charming—everything but a Christian." The loss of her eyesight did not impair the remains of her beauty; her replies, her compliments, were brilliant; even from one whose best organs of expression were mute.

A frequent guest at her suppers, Walpole's kindness, real or pretended, soon made inroads on a heart still susceptible. The ever-green passions of this venerable sinner threw out fresh shoots; and she became enamored of the attentive and admired Englishman. Horace was susceptible of ridicule: there his somewhat icy heart was easily touched. Partly in vanity, partly in playfulness, he encouraged the sentimental exaggeration of his correspondent; but, becoming afraid of the world's laughter, ended by reproving her warmth, and by chilling, under the refrigerating influence of his cautions, all the romance of the octogenarian.

In later days, however, after his solicitude—partly soothed by the return of his letters to Madame du Deffand, partly by her death—had completely subsided, a

happier friendship was permitted to solace his now increasing infirmities, as well as to enhance his social pleasures.

It was during the year 1788, when he was living in retirement at Strawberry, that his auspicious friendship was formed. The only grain of ambition he had left, he declared, was to believe himself forgotten; that was "the thread that had run through his life;" "so true," he adds, "except the folly of being an author, has been what I said last year to the Prince" (afterwards George IV.), "when he asked me 'If I was a Freemason,' I replied, 'No sir; I never was anything.'"

Lady Charleville told him that some of her friends had been to see Strawberry. "Lord!" cried one lady, "who is that Mr. Walpole?" "Lord!" cried a second, "don't you know the great epicure, Mr. Walpole?" "Who?" cried the first,—"great epicure! you mean the antiquarian." "Surely," adds Horace, "this anecdote may take its place in the chapter of local fame."

But he reverts to his new acquisition—the acquaintance of the Miss Berrys, who had accidentally taken a house next to his at Strawberry Hill. Their story, he adds, was a curious one: their descent Scotch; their grandfather had an estate of £6000 a year, but disinherited his son on account of his marrying a woman with no fortune. She died, and the grandfather, wishing for an heir-male, pressed the widower to marry again: he refused; and said he would devote himself

to the education of his two daughters. The second son generously gave up £800 a year to his brother, and the two motherless girls were taken to the Continent, whence they returned the "best informed and most perfect creatures that Horace Walpole ever saw at their age."

Sensible, natural, frank, their conversation proved most agreeable to a man who was sated of grand society, and sick of vanity until he had indulged in vexation of spirit. He discovered by chance only—for there was no pedantry in these truly well-educated women—that the eldest understood Latin, and "was a perfect Frenchwoman in her language." Then the youngest drew well; and copied one of Lady Di Beauclerk's pictures, "The Gypsies," though she had never attempted colors before. Then, as to looks: Mary, the eldest, had a sweet face, the more interesting from being pale; with fine dark eyes that were lighted up when she spoke. Agnes, the younger, was "hardly to be called handsome, but almost;" with an agreeable sensible countenance. It is remarkable that women thus delineated—not beauties, yet not plain—are always the most fascinating to men. The sisters doted on each other: Mary taking the lead in society. "I must even tell you," Horace wrote to the Countess of Ossory, "that they dress within the bounds of fashion, but without the excrescences and balconies with which modern hoydens overwhelm and barricade their persons." (One would almost have supposed that Horace had lived in the days of crinoline.)

The first night that Horace met the two sisters, he refused to be introduced to them: having heard so much of them that he concluded they would be "all pretension." The second night that he met them, he sat next Mary, and found her an "angel both inside and out." He did not know which he liked best; but Mary's face, which was formed for a sentimental novel, or, still more, for genteel comedy, riveted him, he owned. Mr. Berry, the father, was a little "merry man with a round face," whom no one would have suspected of sacrificing "all for love, and the world well lost." This delightful family visited him every Sunday evening; the region of Twickenham being too "proclamatory" for cards to be introduced on the seventh day, conversation was tried instead; thankful, indeed, was Horace for the "pearls," as he styled them, thus thrown in his path. His two "Strawberries," as he christened them, were henceforth the theme of every letter. He had set up a printing-press many years previously at Strawberry, and on taking the young ladies to see it, he remembered the gallantry of his former days, and they found these stanzas in type:—

"To Mary's lips has ancient Rome
Her purest language taught;
And from the modern city home
Agnes its pencil brought.

"Rome's ancient Horace sweetly chants
Such maids with lyric fire;

Albion's old Horace sings nor paints,
He only can admire.

"Still would his press their fame record,
So amiable the pair is!
But, ah! how vain to think his word
Can add a straw to Berry's."

On the following day, Mary, whom he terms the Latin nymph, sent the following lines:—

"Had Rome's famed Horace thus addrest
His Lydia or his Lyce,
He had ne'er so oft complained their breast
To him was cold and icy.

"But had they sought their joy to explain,
Or praise their generous bard,
Perhaps, like me, they had tried in vain,
And felt the task too hard."

The society of this family gave Horace Walpole the truest, and perhaps the only relish he ever had of domestic life. But his mind was harassed towards the close of the eighteenth century, by the insanity not only of his nephew, but by the great national calamity, that of the king. "Every *eighty-eight* seems," he remarks, "to be a favorite period with fate;" he was "too ancient," he said, "to tap what might almost be called a new reign;" of which he was not likely to see much. He never pretended to penetration, but his foresight, "if he gave it the rein, would not prognosticate much felicity to the country from the madness of his father, and the probable

regency of the Prince of Wales." His happiest relations were now not with politics or literature, but with Mrs. Damer and the Miss Berrys, to whom he wrote: —"I am afraid of protesting how much I delight in your society, lest I should seem to affect being gallant; but, if two negatives make an affirmative, why may not two ridicules compose one piece of sense? and, therefore, as I am in love with you both, I trust it is a proof of the good sense of your devoted—H. WALPOLE."

He was doomed, in the decline of life, to witness two great national convulsions: of the insurrection of 1745 he wrote feelingly—justly—almost pathetically: forty-five years later he was tired, he said, of railing against French barbarity and folly. "Legislators! a Senate! to neglect laws, in order to annihilate coats-of-arms and liveries!" George Selwyn said, that Monsieur the king's brother was the only man of rank from whom they could not take a title. His alarm at the idea of his two young friends going to the Continent was excessive. The flame of revolution had burst forth at Florence: Flanders was not a safe road; dreadful horrors had been perpetrated at Avignon. Then he relates a characteristic anecdote of poor *Marie Antoinette!* She went with the king to see the manufacture of glass. As they passed the Halle, the *poissardes* hurra'd them. "Upon my word," said the queen, "these folks are civiller when you visit them, than when they visit you."

Walpole's affection for the Miss Berrys cast a glow of happiness over the fast-ebbing years of his life. "In happy days," he wrote to them when they were abroad, "I called you my dear wives; now I can only think of you as darling children, of whom I am bereaved." He was proud of their affection; proud of their spending many hours with "a very old man," whilst they were the objects of general admiration. These charming women survived until our own time, the centre of a circle of the leading characters in literature, politics, art, rank, and virtue. They are remembered with true regret. The fulness of their age perfected the promise of their youth. Samuel Rogers used to say that they had lived in the reign of Queen Anne, so far back seemed their memories which were so coupled to the past; but the youth of their minds, their feelings, their intelligence, remained almost to the last.

For many years Horace Walpole continued, in spite of incessant attacks of the gout, to keep almost open house at Strawberry; in short, he said, he kept an inn—the sign, the Gothic Castle! "Take my advice," he wrote to a friend, "never build a charming house for yourself between London and Hampton Court; everybody will live in it but you."

The death of Lady Suffolk, in 1767, had been an essential loss to her partial, and not too rigid neighbors. Two days before the death of George II. she had gone to Kensington, not knowing that there was a

review there. Hemmed in by coaches, she found herself close to George II. and to Lady Yarmouth. Neither of them knew her—a circumstance which greatly affected the countess.

Horace Walpole was now desirous of growing old with dignity. He had no wish "to dress up a withered person, nor to drag it about to public places;" but he was equally averse from "sitting at home, wrapped up in flannels," to receive condolences from people he did not care for—and attentions from relations who were impatient for his death. Well might a writer in the "Quarterly Review" remark, that our most useful lessons in reading Walpole's Letters are not only derived from his sound sense, but from "considering this man of the world, full of information and sparkling with vivacity, stretched on a sick bed, and apprehending all the tedious languor of helpless decrepitude and deserted solitude." His later years had been diversified by correspondence with Hannah More, who sent him her poem of the *Bas Bleu*, into which she had introduced his name. In 1786 she visited him at Strawberry Hill. He was then a martyr to the gout, but with spirits gay as ever: "I never knew a man to suffer pain with such entire patience," was Hannah More's remark. His correspondence with her continued regularly; but that with the charming sisters was delightfully interrupted by their residence at little Strawberry Hill—*Cliveden*, as it was also called, where day after day, night after

night, they gleaned stores from that rich fund of anecdote which went back to the days of George I., touched even on the anterior epoch of Anne, and came in volumes of amusement down to the very era when the old man was sitting by his parlor fire, happy with his *wives* near him, resigned and cheerful. For his young friends he composed his "Reminiscences of the Court of England."

He still wrote cheerfully of his physical state, in which eyesight was perfect; hearing little impaired; and though his hands and feet were crippled, he could use them; and since he neither "wished to box, to wrestle, nor to dance a hornpipe," he was contented.

His character became softer, his wit less caustic, his heart more tender, his talk more reverent, as he approached the term of a long, prosperous life—and knew, practically, the small value of all that he had once too fondly prized.

His later years were disturbed by the marriage of his niece Maria Waldegrave to the Duke of Gloucester: but the severest interruption to his peace was his own succession to an earldom.

In 1791, George, Earl of Orford, expired; leaving an estate encumbered with debt, and, added to the bequest, a series of lawsuits threatened to break down all remaining comfort in the mind of the uncle, who had already suffered so much on the young man's account.

Horace Walpole disdained the honors which brought him such solid trouble, with such empty titles, and for some time refused to sign himself otherwise but "Uncle to the late Earl of Orford." He was certainly not likely to be able to walk in his robes to the House of Lords, or to grace a levee. However, he thanked God he was free from pain. "Since all my fingers are useless," he wrote to Hannah More, "and that I have only six hairs left, I am not very much grieved at not being able to comb my head!" To Hannah More he wrote in all sincerity, referring to his elevation to the peerage: "For the other empty metamorphosis that has happened to the outward man, you do me justice in believing that it can do nothing but tease me; it is being called names in one's old age:" in fact, he reckoned on being styled "Lord Methusalem." He had lived to hear of the cruel deaths of the once gay and high-born friends whom he had known in Paris, by the guillotine: he had lived to execrate the monsters who persecuted the grandest heroine of modern times, Marie Antoinette, to madness; he lived to censure the infatuation of religious zeal in the Birmingham riots. "Are not the devils escaped out of the swine, and overrunning the earth headlong?" he asked in one of his letters.

He had offered his hand, and all the ambitious views which it opened, to each of the Miss Berrys successively, but they refused to bear his name, though they still cheered his solitude: and, strange to say, two of

the most admired and beloved women of their time remained single.

In 1796, the sinking invalid was persuaded to remove to Berkeley Square, to be within reach of good and prompt advice. He consented unwillingly, for his "Gothic Castle" was his favorite abode. He left it with a presentiment that he should see it no more; but he followed the proffered advice, and in the spring of the year was established in Berkeley Square. His mind was still clear. He seems to have cherished to the last a concern for that literary fame which he affected to despise. "Literature has," he said, "many revolutions; if an author could raise from the dead, after a hundred years, what would be his surprise at the adventures of his works! I often say, perhaps my books may be published in Paternoster Row!" He would indeed have been astonished at the vast circulation of his Letters, and the popularity which has carried them into every aristocratic family in England. It is remarkable that among the middle and lower classes they are far less known, for he was essentially the chronicler, as well as the wit and beau, of St. James's, of Windsor, and Richmond.

At last he declared that he should "be content with a sprig of rosemary" thrown on him when the parson of the parish commits his "dust to dust." The end of his now suffering existence was near at hand. Irritability, one of the unpitied accompaniments of weakness, seemed to compete with the gathering clouds of

mental darkness as the last hour drew on. At intervals there were flashes of a wit that appeared at that solemn moment hardly natural, and that must have startled, rather than pleased, the watchful friends around him. He became unjust in his fretfulness, and those who loved him most could not wish to see him survive the wreck of his intellect. Fever came on, and he died on the 2d of March, 1797.

He had collected his letters from his friends: these epistles were deposited in two boxes, one marked with an A, the other with a B. The chest A was not to be opened until the eldest son of his grandniece, Lady Laura, should attain the age of twenty-five. The chest was found to contain memoirs, and bundles of letters ready for publication.

It was singular, at the sale of the effects at Strawberry Hill, to see this chest, with the MSS. in the clean *Horatian* hand, and to reflect how poignant would have been the anguish of the writer could he have seen his Gothic Castle given up for fourteen days to all that could pain the living, or degrade the dead.

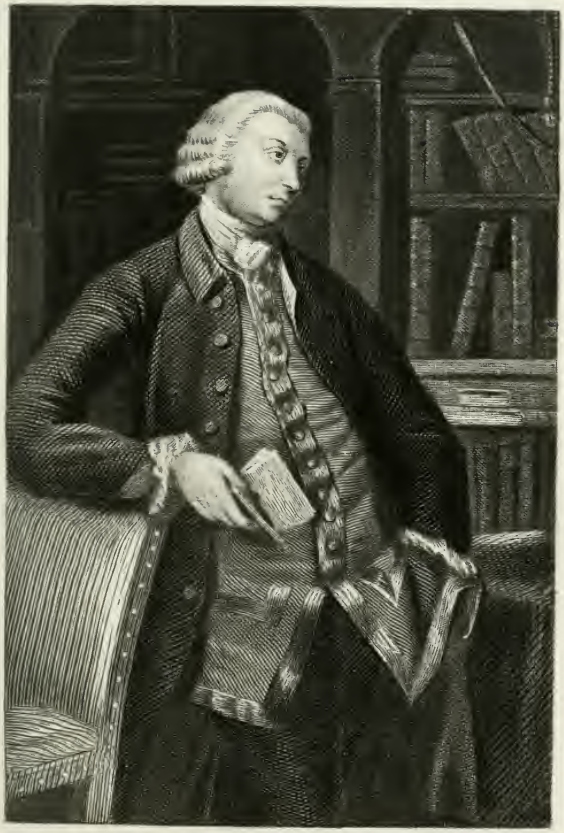
Peace to his manes, prince of letter-writers! prince companion of beaux! wit of the highest order! Without thy pen, society in the eighteenth century would have been to us almost as dead as the *beau monde* of Pompeii, or the remains of Etruscan leaders of the ton. Let us not be ungrateful to our Horace: we owe him more than we could ever have calculated on before we knew him through his works: prejudiced, he was not

false; cold, he was rarely cruel; egotistical, he was seldom vain-glorious. Every age should have a Horace Walpole; every country possess a chronicler so sure, so keen to perceive, so exact to delineate peculiarities, manners, characters, and events.

GEORGE SELWYN.

I HAVE heard, at times, of maiden ladies of a certain age who found pleasure in the affection of "spotted snakes with double tongue, thorny hedge-hogs, newts, and in live worms." I frequently meet ladies who think conversation lacks interest without the recital of "melancholy deaths," "fatal diseases," and "mournful cases;" *on ne disputes pas les goûts*, and certainly the taste for the night side of nature seems immensely prevalent among the lower orders—in whom, perhaps, the terrible only can rouse from a sullen insensibility. What happy people! I always think to myself, when I hear of the huge attendance on the last tragic performance at Newgate; how very little they can see of mournful and horrible in common life, if they seek it out so eagerly, and relish it so thoroughly when they find it! I don't know; for my own part, *gaudeamus*. I have always thought that the text, "Blessed are they that mourn," referred to the inner private life, not to a perpetual display of sackcloth and ashes; but I know not. I can understand the weeping-willow taste among people, who have too little wit or too little Christianity to be cheerful, but it is a wonder to find the luxury of

George Selwyn.



gloom united to the keenest perception of the laughable in such a man as George Selwyn.

If human beings could be made pets, like Miss Tabitha's snake or toad, Selwyn would have fondled a hangman. He loved the noble art of execution, and was a connoisseur of the execution of the art. In childhood he must have decapitated his rocking-horse, hanged his doll in a miniature gallows, and burnt his baubles at mimic stakes. The man whose calm eye was watched for the quiet sparkle that announced—and only that ever did announce it—the flashing wit within the mind, by a gay crowd of loungers at Arthur's, might be found next day rummaging among coffins in a damp vault, glorying in a mummy, confessing and preparing a live criminal, paying any sum for a relic of a dead one, or pressing eagerly forward to witness the dying agonies of a condemned man.

Yet Walpole and Warner both bore the highest testimony to the goodness of his heart; and it is impossible to doubt that his nature was as gentle as a woman's. There have been other instances of even educated men delighting in scenes of suffering; but in general their characters have been more or less gross, their heads more or less insensible. The husband of Madame Récamier went daily to see the guillotine do its vile work during the Reign of Terror; but then he was a man who never wept over the death of a friend. The man who was devoted to a little child, whom he

adopted and treated with the tenderest care, was very different from M. Récamier—and that he *had* a heart there is no doubt. He was an anomaly, and famous for being so; though, perhaps, his well-known eccentricity was taken advantage of by his witty friends, and many a story fathered on Selwyn which has no origin but in the brain of its narrator.

George Augustus Selwyn, then, famous for his wit, and notorious for his love of horrors, was the second son of a country gentleman, of Matson, in Gloucestershire, Colonel John Selwyn, who had been an aide-de-camp of Marlborough's, and afterwards a frequenter of the courts of the first two Georges. He inherited his wit chiefly from his mother, Mary, the daughter of General Farington or Farringdon, of the county of Kent. Walpole tells us that she figured among the beauties of the court of the Prince and Princess of Wales, and was bedchamber-woman to Queen Caroline. Her character was not spotless, for we hear of an intrigue, which her own mistress imparted in confidence to the Duchess of Orleans (the mother of the Regent: they wrote on her tomb *Cy gist l'oisiveté*, because idleness is the *mother* of all vice), and which eventually found its way into the "Utrecht Gazette." It was Mrs. Selwyn, too, who said to George II., that he was the last person she would ever have an intrigue with, because she was sure he would tell the queen of it: it was well known that that very virtuous sovereign made his wife the confidante of his amours, which was

even more shameless than young De Sévigné's taking advice from his mother on his intrigue with Ninon de l'Enclos. She seems to have been reputed a wit, for Walpole retails her *mots* as if they were worth it, but they are not very remarkable: for instance, when Miss Pelham lost a pair of diamond earrings, which she had borrowed, and tried to faint when the loss was discovered, some one called for lavender-drops as a restorative. "Pooh!" cries Mrs. Selwyn, "give her diamond-drops."

George Augustus was born on the 11th of August, 1719. Walpole says that he knew him at eight years old, and as the two were at Eton about the same time, it is presumed that they were contemporaries there. In fact, a list of the boys there, in 1732, furnished to Eliot Warburton, contains the names of Walpole, Selwyn, Edgecumbe, and Conway, all in after-life intimate friends and correspondents. From Eton to Oxford was the natural course, and George was duly entered at Hertford College. He did not long grace Alma Mater, for the *grand tour* had to be made and London life to be begun, but he was there long enough to contract the usual Oxford debts, which his father consented to pay more than once. It is amusing to find the son getting Dr. Newton to write him a contrite and respectful letter to the angry parent to liquidate the "small accounts" accumulated in London and Oxford as early as 1740. Three years later we find him in Paris, leading a gay life, and writing

respectful letters to England for more money. Previously to this, however, he had obtained, through his father, the sinecure of Clerk of the Irons and surveyor of the Melting at the Mint, a comfortable little appointment, the duties of which were performed by deputy, while its holder contented himself with honestly acknowledging the salary, and dining once a week, when in town, with the officers of the Mint, and at the Government's expense.

So far the young gentleman went on well enough, but in 1744 he returned to England, and his rather rampant character showed itself in more than one disgraceful affair.

Among the London shows was Orator Henley, a clergyman and clergyman's son, and a member of St. John's, Cambridge. He had come to London about this time, and instituted a series of lectures on universal knowledge and primitive Christianity. He styled himself a Rationalist, a title then more honorable than it is now; and in grandiloquent language, "spouted" on religious subjects to an audience admitted at a shilling a head. On one occasion he announced a disputation among any two of his hearers, offering to give an impartial hearing and judgment to both. Selwyn and the young Lord Carteret were prepared, and stood up, the one to defend the ignorance, the other the impudence, of Orator Henley himself; so, at least, it is inferred from a passage in D'Israeli the Elder. The uproar that ensued can well be imagined. Henley

himself escaped by a back door. His pulpit, all gilt, has been immortalized by Pope, as "Henley's gilt tub;" in which—

> "Imbrown'd with native bronze, lo! Henley stands,
> Tuning his voice and balancing his hands."

The affair gave rise to a correspondence between the Orator and his young friends; who, doubtless, came off best in the matter.

This was harmless enough, but George's next freak was not so excusable. The circumstances of this affair are narrated in a letter from Captain Nicholson, his friend, to George Selwyn; and may, therefore, be relied on. It appears that being at a certain club in Oxford, at a wine party with his friends, George sent to a certain silversmith's for a certain chalice, intrusted to the shopkeeper from a certain church to be repaired in a certain manner. This being brought, Master George—then, be it remembered, not at the delicate and frivolous age of most Oxford boys, but at the mature one of six-and-twenty—filled it with wine, and handing it round, used the sacred words, "Drink this in remembrance of me." This was a blasphemous parody of the most sacred rite of the Church. All Selwyn could say for himself was, that he was drunk when he did it. The other plea, that he did it in ridicule of the transubstantiation of the Romish Church, could not stand at all, and was most weakly put forward. Let Oxford Dons be what they will; let them put a stop

to all religious inquiry, and nearly expel Adam Smith for reading Hume's "Essay on Human Nature;" let them be, as many allege, narrow-minded, hypocritical, and ignorant; we cannot charge them with wrong-dealing in expelling the originator of such open blasphemy, which nothing can be found to palliate, and of which its perpetrator did not appear to repent, rather complaining that the treatment of the Dons was harsh. The act of expulsion was, of course, considered in the same light by his numerous acquaintance, many of whom condoled with him on the occasion. It is true, the Oxford Dons are often charged with injustice and partiality, and too often the evidence is not sufficiently strong to excuse their judgments; but in this the evidence was not denied; only a palliative was put in, which every one can see through. The only injustice we can discover in this case is, that the head of Hart Hall, as Hertford College was called, seemed to have been influenced in pronouncing his sentence of expulsion by certain previous *suspicions*, having no bearing on the question before him, which had been entertained by another set of tutors—those of Christ Church—where Selwyn had many friends, and where, probably enough, he indulged in many collegians' freaks. This knack of bringing up a mere suspicion is truly characteristic of the Oxford Don, and since the same head of this House—Dr. Newton—acknowledged that Selwyn was, during his Oxford career, neither intemperate, dissolute, nor a gamester, it is fair to give him the

advantage of the doubt, that the judgment on the evidence had been influenced by the consideration of "suspicions" of former misdeeds, which had not been proved, perhaps never committed. Knowing the after-life of the man, we can, however, scarcely doubt that George had led a fast life at the University, and given cause for mistrust. But one may ask whether Dons, whose love of drinking, and whose tendency to jest on the most solemn subjects, are well known even in the present day, might not have treated Selwyn less harshly for what was done under the influence of wine? To this we are inclined to reply, that no punishment is too severe for profanation; and that drunkenness is not an excuse, but an aggravation. Selwyn threatened to appeal, and took advice on the matter. This, as usual, was vain. Many an expelled man, more unjustly treated than Selwyn, has talked of appeal in vain. Appeal to whom? to what? Appeal against men who never acknowledged themselves wrong, and who, to maintain that they are right, will listen to evidence which they can see is contradictory, and which they know to be worthless! An appeal from an Oxford decision is as hopeless in the present day as it was in Selwyn's. He wisely left it alone, but less wisely insisted on reappearing in Oxford, against the advice of all his friends, whose characters were lost if the ostracized man were seen among them.

From this time he entered upon his "profession," that of a wit, gambler, club-lounger, and a man about

town; for these many characters are all mixed in the one which is generally called "a wit." Let us remember that he was good-hearted, and not ill-intentioned, though imbued with the false ideas of his day. He was not a great man, but a great wit.

The localities in which the trade of wit was plied were, then, the clubs, and the drawing-rooms of fashionable beauties. The former were in Selwyn's youth still limited in the number of their members, thirty constituting a large club; and as the subscribers were all known to one another, presented an admirable field for display of mental powers in conversation. In fact, the early clubs were nothing more than dining-societies, precisely the same in theory as our breakfasting arrangements at Oxford, which were every whit as exclusive, though not balloted for. The ballot, however, and the principle of a single black ball sufficing to negative an election, were not only, under such circumstances, excusable, but even necessary for the actual preservation of peace. Of course, in a succession of dinner-parties, if any two members were at all opposed to one another, the awkwardness would be intolerable. In the present day, two men may belong to the same club and scarcely meet, even on the stairs, oftener than once or twice in a season.

Gradually, however, in the place of the "feast of reason and flow of soul" and wine, instead of the evenings spent in toasting, talking, emptying bottles and filling heads, as in the case of the old Kit-kat,

men took to the monstrous amusement of examining fate, and on club-tables the dice rattled far more freely than the glasses, though these latter were not necessarily abandoned. Then came the thirst for hazard that brought men early in the day to try their fortune, and thus made the club-room a lounge. Selwyn was an habitual frequenter of Brookes'.

Brookes' was, perhaps, the principal club of the day, though "White's Chocolate House" was almost on a par with it. But Selwyn did not confine his attention solely to this club. It was the fashion to belong to as many of them as possible, and Wilberforce mentions no less than five to which he himself belonged: Brookes', Boodle's, White's, Miles and Evans's in New Palace Yard, and Goosetree's. As their names imply, these were all, originally, mere coffee-houses, kept by men of the above names. One or two rooms then sufficed for the requirements of a small party, and it was not till the members were greatly increased that the coffee-house rose majestically to the dignity of a bow-window, and was entirely and exclusively appropriated to the requirements of the club.

This was especially the case with White's, of which so many of the wits and talkers of Selwyn's day were members. Who does not know that bow-window at the top of St. James's Street, where there are sure, about three or four in the afternoon, to be at least three gentlemen, two old and one young, standing, to the exclusion of light within, talking and contemplating the

oft-repeated movement outside. White's was established as early as 1698, and was thus one of the original coffee-houses. It was then kept by a man named Arthur: here Chesterfield gamed and talked, to be succeeded by Gilly Williams, Charles Townshend, and George Selwyn. The old house was burnt down in 1733. It was at White's—or, as Hogarth calls it in his pictorial squib, Black's—that, when a man fell dead at the door, he was lugged in and bets made as to whether he was dead or no. The surgeon's operations were opposed, for fear of disturbing the bets. Here, too, did George Selwyn and Charles Townshend pit their wit against wit; and here Pelham passed all the time he was not forced to devote to politics. In short, it was, next to Brookes', the club of the day, and perhaps in some respects had a greater renown than even that famous club, and its play was as high.

In Brookes' and White's Selwyn appeared with a twofold fame, that of a pronouncer of *bon-mots*, and that of a lover of horrors. His wit was of the quaintest order. He was no inveterate talker, like Sydney Smith; no clever dissimulator, like Mr. Hook. Calmly, almost sanctimoniously, he uttered those neat and telling sayings which the next day passed over England as "Selwyn's last." Walpole describes his manner admirably—his eyes turned up, his mouth set primly, a look almost of melancholy in his whole face. Reynolds, in his Conversation-Piece, celebrated when in the Strawberry Collection, and representing Selwyn leaning on a

chair, Gilly Williams, crayon in hand, and Dick Edgecumbe by his side, has caught the pseudo-solemn expression of his face admirably. The case of the figure, one hand *empochée*, the other holding a paper of epigrams, or what not, the huge waistcoat with a dozen buttons and huge flaps, the ruffled sleeve, the bob-wig, all belong to the outer man; but the calm, quiet, almost inquiring face, the look half of melancholy, half of reproach, and, as the Milesian would say, the other half of sleek wisdom; the long nose, the prim mouth and joined lips, the elevated brow, and beneath it the quiet contemplative eye, contemplative not of heaven or hell, but of this world as it had seen it, in its most worldly point of view, yet twinkling with a flashing thought of incongruity made congruous, are the indices of the inner man. Most of our wits, it must have been seen, have had some other interest and occupation in life than that of "making wit:" some have been authors, some statesmen, some soldiers, some wild-rakes, and some players of tricks: Selwyn had no profession but that of *diseur de bons mots;* for though he sat in the House, he took no prominent part in politics; though he gambled extensively, he did not game for the sake of money only. Thus his life was that merely of a London bachelor, with few incidents to mark it, and therefore his memoir must resolve itself more or less into a series of anecdotes of his eccentricities and list of his witticisms.

His friend Walpole gives us an immense number of both, not all of a first-rate nature, nor many interesting in the present day. Selwyn, calm as he was, brought out his sayings on the spur of the moment, and their appropriateness to the occasion was one of their greatest recommendations. A good saying, like a good sermon, depends much on its delivery, and loses much in print. Nothing less immortal than wit! To take first, however, the eccentricities of his character, and especially his love of horrors, we find anecdotes by the dozen retailed of him. It was so well known, that Lord Holland, when dying, ordered his servant to be sure to admit Mr. Selwyn if he called to inquire after him, "for if I'm alive," said he "I shall be glad to see him, and if I am dead, he will be glad to see me." The name of Holland leads us to an anecdote told by Walpole. Selwyn was looking over Cornbury with Lord Abergavenny and Mrs. Frere, "who loved one another a little," and was disgusted with the frivolity of the woman, who could take no interest in anything worth seeing. "You don't know what you missed in the other room," he cried at last, peevishly.—"Why, what?"—"Why, my Lord Holland's picture."—"Well, what is my Lord Holland to me?"—"Don't you know," whispered the wit, mysteriously, "that Lord Holland's body lies in the same vault in Kensington Church with my Lord Abergavenny's mother?"—"Lord! she was so obliged," says Walpole, "and thanked him a thousand times!"

Selwyn knew the vaults as thoroughly as old Anthony Wood knew the brasses. The elder Craggs had risen by the favor of Marlborough, whose footman he had been, and his son was eventually a Secretary of State. Arthur Moore, the father of James Moore Smyth, of whom Pope wrote—

> "Arthur, whose giddy son neglects the laws,
> Imputes to me and my damned works the cause"—

had worn a livery too. When Craggs got into a coach with him, he exclaimed, "Why, Arthur, I am always getting up behind, are not you?" Walpole having related this story to Selwyn, the latter told him, as a most important communication, that Arthur Moore had had his coffin chained to that of his mistress. "Lord! how do you know?" asked Horace. "Why, I saw them the other day in a vault at St. Giles's." "Oh! your servant, Mr. Selwyn," cried the man who showed the tombs at Westminster Abbey, "I expected to see *you* here the other day when the old Duke of Richmond's body was taken up."

Criminals were, of course, included in his passion. Walpole affirms that he had a great share in bringing Lord Dacre's footman, who had murdered the butler, to confess his crime. In writing the confession, the ingenious plush coolly stopped and asked how "murdered" was spelled. But it mattered little to George whether the criminal were alive or dead, and he defended his eccentric taste with his usual wit; when

rallied by some women for going to see the Jacobite Lord Lovat's head cut off, he retorted, sharply—"I made full amends, for I went to see it sewn on again." He had indeed done so, and given the company at the undertaker's a touch of his favorite blasphemy, for when the man of coffins had done his work and laid the body in its box, Selwyn, imitating the voice of the Lord Chancellor at the trial, muttered, "My Lord Lovat, you may *rise*." He said a better thing on the trial of a confederate of Lovat's, that Lord Kilmarnock, with whom the ladies fell so desperately in love as he stood on his defence. Mrs. Bethel, who was famous for a *hatchet-face*, was among the fair spectators. "What a shame it is," quoth the wit, "to turn her face to the prisoners before they are condemned!" Terrible, indeed, was that instrument of death to those men, who had in the heat of battle so gallantly met sword and blunderbuss. The slow, sure approach of the day of the scaffold was a thousand times worse than the roar of cannon. Lord Cromarty was pardoned, solely, it was said, from pity for his poor wife, who was at the time of the trial far advanced in pregnancy. It was affirmed that the child born had a distinct mark of an axe on his neck. *Credat Judæus!* Walpole used to say that Selwyn never thought but *à la tête tranchée*, and that when he went to have a tooth drawn, he told the dentist he would drop his handkerchief by way of signal. Certain it is that he did love an execution, whatever he or his friends

may have done to remove the impression of this extraordinary taste. Some better men than Selwyn have had the same, and Macaulay accuses Penn of a similar affection. The best known anecdote of Selwyn's peculiarity relates to the execution of Damiens, who was torn with red-hot pincers, and finally quartered by four horses, for the attempt to assassinate Louis XV. On the day fixed, George mingled with the crowd plainly dressed, and managed to press forward close to the place of torture. The executioner observing him, eagerly cried out, "*Faites place pour Monsieur; c'est un Anglais et un amateur;*" or, as another version goes, he was asked if he was not himself a *bourreau*.—"*Non, Monsieur,*" he is said to have answered, "*je n'ai pas cet honneur; je ne suis qu'un amateur.*" The story is more than apocryphal, for Selwyn is not the only person of whom it has been told; and he was even accused, according to Wraxall, of going to executions in female costume. George Selwyn must have passed as a "remarkably fine woman," in that case.

It is only justice to him to say that the many stories of his attending executions were supposed to be inventions of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, another wit, and of Chesterfield, another, and a rival. In confirmation, it is adduced that when the former had been relating some new account, and an old friend of Selwyn's expressed his surprise that he had never heard the tale before, the hero of it replied quietly, "No

wonder at all, for Sir Charles has just invented it, and knows that I will not by contradiction spoil the pleasure of the company he is so highly entertaining."

Wit has been called "the eloquence of indifference;" no one seems ever to have been so indifferent about everything, but his little daughter, as George Selwyn. He always, however, took up the joke, and when asked why he had not been to see one Charles Fox, a low criminal, hanged at Tyburn, answered, quietly, "I make a point of never going to *rehearsals*."

Selwyn's love for this kind of thing, to believe his most intimate friend, Horace Walpole, was quite a fact. His friend relates that he even bargained for the High Sheriff's wand, after it was broken, at the condemnation of the gallant Lords, but said, "that he behaved so like an attorney the first day, and so like a pettifogger the second, that he would not take it to light his fire with."

The State Trials, of course, interested George more than any other in his eventless life; he dined after the sentence with the celebrated Lady Townshend, who was so devoted to Lord Kilmarnock—

"Pitied by gentle minds, Kilmarnock died."—JOHNSON—

that she is said to have even stayed under his windows, when he was in prison; but he treated her anxiety with such lightness that the lady burst into tears, and "flung up-stairs." "George," writes Walpole to Montagu, "coolly took Mrs. Dorcas, her woman, and bade her

sit down to finish the bottle.—'And pray,' said Dorcas, 'do you think my lady will be prevailed upon to let me go and see the execution? I have a friend that has promised to take care of me, and I can lie in the Tower the night before.' Could she have talked more pleasantly to Selwyn?"

His contemporaries certainly believed in his love for Newgatism; for when Walpole had caught a housebreaker in a neighbor's area, he immediately despatched a messenger to White's for the philo-criminalist, who was sure to be playing at the club at any time before daylight. It happened that the drawer at the "Chocolate-house" had been himself lately robbed, and therefore stole to George with fear and trembling, and muttered mysteriously to him, "Mr. Walpole's compliments, and he has got a housebreaker for you." Of course Selwyn obeyed the summons readily, and the event concluded, as such events do nine times out of ten, with a quiet capture, and much ado about nothing.

The Selwyns were a powerful family in Gloucestershire, owning a great deal of property in the neighborhood of Gloucester itself. The old colonel had represented that city in Parliament for many years. On the 5th of November, 1751, he died. His eldest son had gone a few months before him. This son had been also at Eton, and was an early friend of Horace Walpole and General Conway. His death left George sole heir to the property, and very much he seemed to have needed the heritage.

The property of the Selwyns lay in the picturesque district of the Northern Cotswolds. Anybody who has passed a day in the dull city of Gloucester, which seems to break into anything like life only at an election, lying dormant in the intervals, has been glad to rush out to enjoy air and a fine view on Robin Hood's Hill, a favorite walk with the worthy citizens, though what the jovial archer of merry Sherwood had to do with it, or whether he was ever in Gloucestershire at all, I profess I know not. Walpole describes the hill with humorous exaggeration: "It is lofty enough for an alp, yet is a mountain of turf to the very top, has wood scattered all over it, springs that long to be cascades in many places of it, and from the summit it beats even Sir George Littleton's views, by having the city of Gloucester at its foot, and the Severn widening to the horizon." On the very summit of the next hill, Chosen-down, is a solitary church, and the legend saith that the good people who built it did so originally at the foot of the steep mount, that the Virgin Mary carried up the stones at night, till the builder, in despair, was compelled to erect it on the top. Others attribute the mysterious act to a very different personage, and with apparently more reason, for the position of the church must keep many an old sinner from hearing service.

At Matson, then, on Robin Hood's Hill, the Selwyns lived; Walpole says that the "house is small, but neat. King Charles lay here at the siege, and the

Duke of York, with typical fury, hacked and hewed the window-shutters of his chamber as a memorandum of his being there. And here is the very flower-pot and counterfeit association for which Bishop Sprat was taken up, and the Duke of Marlborough sent to the Tower. The reservoirs on the hill supply the city. The late Mr. Selwyn governed the borough by them —and I believe by some wine too." Probably, or at least by some beer, if the modern electors be not much altered from their forefathers.

Besides this important estate, the Selwyns had another at Ludgershall, and their influence there was so complete, that they might fairly be said to *give* one seat to any one they chose. With such double barrels George Selwyn was, of course, a great gun in the House, but his interest lay far more in piquet and pleasantry than in politics and patriotism, and he was never fired off with any but the blank cartridges of his two votes. His parliamentary career, begun in 1747, lasted more than forty years, yet was entirely without distinction. He, however, amused both parties with his wit, and by *snoring in unison* with Lord North. This must have been trying to Mr. Speaker Cornwall, who was longing, no doubt, to snore also, and dared not. He was probably the only Speaker who presided over so august an assemblage as our English Parliament with a pewter pot of porter at his elbow, sending for more and more to Bellamy's till his heavy eyes closed of themselves. A modern M. P., carried back

by some fancies to "the Senate" of those days, might reasonably doubt whether his guide had not taken him by mistake to some Coal-hole or Cider-cellar, presided over by some former Baron Nicholson, and whether the furious eloquence of Messrs. Fox, Pitt, and Burke were not got up for the amusement of an audience admitted at sixpence a head.

Selwyn's political jokes were the delight of Bellamy's! He said that Fox and Pitt reminded him of Hogarth's Idle and Industrious Apprentices. When asked by some one, as he sauntered out of the house —"Is the House up?" he replied: "No, but Burke is." The length of Burke's elaborate spoken essays was proverbial, and obtained for him the name of the "Dinner-bell." Fox was talking one day at Brookes' of the advantageous peace he had made with France, and that he had even induced that country to give up the *gum* trade to England. "That, Charles," quoth Selwyn, sharply, "I am not at all surprised at; for having drawn your *teeth*, they would be d——d fools to quarrel with you about gums." Fox was often the object of his good-natured satire. As every one knows, his boast was to be called "The Man of the People," though perhaps he cared as little for the great unwashed as for the health and happiness of the waiters at his clubs. Every one knows, too, what a dissolute life he led for many years. Selwyn's sleepiness was well known. He slept in the House; he slept, after losing £800 "and with as many more before him," upon the

gaming-table, with the dice-box "stamped close to his ears;" he slept, or half-slept, even in conversation, which he seems to have caught by fits and starts. Thus it was that words he heard suggested different senses, partly from being only dimly associated with the subject on the *tapis*. So, when they were talking around of the war, and whether it should be a sea war or a Continent war, Selwyn woke up just enough to say, "I am for a sea war and a *continent* admiral."

When Fox had ruined himself, and a subscription for him was talked of, some one asked how they thought "he would take it."—"Take it," cried Selwyn, suddenly lighting up, "why, *quarterly*, to be sure."

His parliamentary career was then quite uneventful; but at the dissolution in 1780, he found that his security at Gloucester was threatened. He was not Whig enough for that constituency, and had throughout supported the war with America. He offered himself, of course, but was rejected with scorn, and forced to fly for a seat to Ludgershall. Walpole writes to Lady Ossory: "They" (the Gloucester people) "hanged him in effigy, and dressed up a figure of Mie-Mie" (his adopted daughter), "and pinned on its breast these words, alluding to the gallows:—'This is what I told you you would come to!'" From Gloucester he went to Ludgershall, where he was received by ringing of bells and bonfires. "Being driven out of my capital," said he, "and coming into that country of turnips,

where I was adored, I seemed to be arrived in my Hanoverian dominions"—no bad hit at George II. For Ludgershall he sat for many years, with Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, whose "Memoirs" are better known than trusted, as colleague. That writer says of Selwyn, that he was "thoroughly well versed in our history, and master of many curious as well as secret anecdotes relative to the houses of Stuart and Brunswick."

Another *bon-mot*, not in connection with politics, is reported by Walpole as incomparable. Lord George Gordon asked him if the Ludgershall electors would take him (Lord George) for Ludgershall, adding, "If you would recomend me, they would choose me, if I came from the coast of Africa."—"That is according to what part of the coast you came from; they would certainly, if you came from the Guinea coast."—"Now, Madam," writes his friend, "is not this true inspiration as well as true wit? Had any one asked him in which of the four quarters of the world Guinea is situated, could he have told?" Walpole did not perhaps know Master George thoroughly—he was neither so ignorant nor so indifferent as he seemed. His manner got him the character of being both; but he was a still fool that ran deep.

Though Selwyn did little with his two votes, he made them pay: and in addition to the post in the Mint, got out of the party he suppported those of Registrar to the Court of Chancery in the Island

of Barbadoes, a sinecure done by deputy, Surveyor of the Crown Lands, and Paymaster to the Board of Works. The wits of White's added the title of "Receiver-General of Waif and Stray Jokes." It is said that his hostility to Sheridan arose from the latter having lost him the office in the Works in 1782, when Burke's bill for reducing the Civil List came into operation; but this is not at all probable, as his dislike was shown long before that period. Apropos of the Board of Works, Walpole gives another anecdote. On one occasion, in 1780, Lord George Gordon had been the only opponent on a division. Selwyn afterwards took him in his carriage to White's. "I have brought," said he, "the whole Opposition in my coach, and I hope one coach will always hold them, if they mean to take away the Board of Works."

Undoubtedly, Selwyn's wit wanted the manner of the man to make it so popular, for, as we read it, it is often rather mild. To string a list of his witticisms together:—

Lady Coventry showed him her new dress all covered with spangles as large as shillings. "Bless my soul," said he, "you'll be change for a guinea."

Fox, debtor and bankrupt as he was, had taken lodgings with Fitzpatrick at an oilman's in Piccadilly. Every one pitied the landlord, who would certainly be ruined. "Not a bit of it," quoth George; "he'll have the credit of keeping at his house the finest pickles in London."

Sometimes there was a good touch of satire on his times. When "High Life Below Stairs" was first acted, Selwyn vowed he would go and see it, for he was sick of low life above stairs; and when a waiter at his club had been convicted of felony, "What a horrid idea," said he, "the man will give of *us* in Newgate!"

Dining with Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, he heard him say, in answer to a question about musical instruments in the East, "I believe I saw one *lyre* there."—"Ay," whispered the wit to his neighbor, "and there's one less since he left the country." Bruce shared the travellers' reputation of drawing the long-bow to a very considerable extent.

Two of Selwyn's best *mots* were about one of the Foley family, who were so deeply in debt that they had "to go to Texas," or Boulogne, to escape the money-lenders. "That," quoth Selwyn, "is a *pass-over* which will not be much relished by the Jews." And again, when it was said that they would be able to cancel their father's old will by a new-found one, he profanely indulged in a pun far too impious to be repeated in our day, however it may have been relished in Selwyn's time.

A picture called "The Daughter of Pharaoh," in which the Princess Royal and her attendant ladies figured as the saver of Moses and her handmaids, was being exhibited in 1782, at a house opposite Brookes', and was to be the companion-piece to Cop-

ley's "Death of Chatham." George said he could recommend a better companion, to wit—the "Sons of Pharaoh" at the opposite house. It is scarcely necessary to explain that pharaoh or faro was the most popular game of hazard then played.

Walking one day with Lord Pembroke, and being besieged by a troop of small chimney-climbers, begging—Selwyn, after bearing their importunity very calmly for some time, suddenly turned round, and with the most serious face thus addressed them—"I have often heard of the sovereignty of the people; I suppose your highnesses are in Court mourning." We can well imagine the effect of this sedate speech on the astonished youngsters.

Pelham's truculency was well known. Walpole and his friend went to the sale of his plate in 1755. "Lord," said the wit, "how many toads have been eaten off these plates!"

The jokes were not always very delicate. When, in the middle of the summer of 1751, Lord North, who had been twice married before, espoused the widow of the Earl of Rockingham, who was fearfully stout, Selwyn suggested that she had been kept in ice for three days before the wedding. So, too, when there was talk of another *embonpoint* personage going to America during the war, he remarked that she would make a capital *breast*-work.

One of the few epigrams he ever wrote—if not the only one, of which there is some doubt—was in the

same spirit. It is on the discovery of a pair of shoes in a certain lady's bed—

> "Well may Suspicion shake its head—
> Well may Clorinda's spouse be jealous,
> When the dear wanton takes to bed
> Her very shoes—because they're *fellows*."

Such are a few specimens of George Selwyn's wit; and dozens more are dispersed through Walpole's Letters. As Eliot Warburton remarks, they do not give us a very high idea of the humor of the period; but two things must be taken into consideration before we deprecate their author's title to the dignity and reputation he enjoyed so abundantly among his contemporaries: they are not necessarily the *best* specimens that might have been given, if more of the *mots* had been preserved; and their effect on his listeners depended more on the manner of delivery than on the matter. That they were improvised and unpremeditated is another important consideration. It is quite unfair to compare them, as Warburton does, with the hebdomadal trash of "Punch," though perhaps they would stand the comparison pretty well. It is one thing to force wit with plenty of time to invent and meditate it—another to have so much wit within you that you can bring it out on any occasion; one thing to compose a good fancy for *money*—another to utter it only when it flashes through the brain.

But it matters little what we in the present day may

think of Selwyn's wit, for conversation is spoiled by bottling, and should be drawn fresh when wanted. Selwyn's companions—all men of wit, more or less—affirmed him to be the most amusing man of his day, and that was all the part he had to play. No real wit ever hopes to *talk* for posterity; and written wit is of a very different character to the more sparkling, if less solid, creations of a moment.

We have seen Selwyn in many points of view, not all very creditable to him; first, expelled from Oxford for blasphemy; next, a professed gambler, and the associate of men who led fashion in those days, it is true, but then it was very bad fashion; then as a lover of hangmen, a wit and a lounger. There is reason to believe that Selwyn, though less openly reprobate than many of his associates, was, in his quiet way, just as bad as any of them, if we except the Duke of Queensberry, his intimate friend, or the disgusting "Franciscans" of Medmenham Abbey, of whom, though not the founder, nor even a member, he was, in a manner, the suggester in his blasphemy.

But Selwyn's real character is only seen in profile in all these accounts. He had at the bottom of such vice, to which his position and the fashion of the day introduced him, a far better heart than any of his contemporaries, and in some respects a kind of simplicity which was endearing. He was neither knave nor fool. He was not a voluptuary, like his friend the duke; nor a continued drunkard, like many other "fine gentle-

men" with whom he mixed; nor a cheat, though a gambler; nor a sceptic, like his friend Walpole; nor a blasphemer, like the Medmenham set, though he had once parodied profanely a sacred rite; nor was he steeped in debt, as Fox was; nor does he appear to have been a practised seducer, as too many of his acquaintance were. Not that these negative qualities are to his praise; but if we look at the age and the society around him, we must, at least, admit that Selwyn was not one of the worst of that wicked set.

But the most pleasing point in the character of the old bachelor—for he was *too much* of a wit ever to marry—is his affection for children—not his own. That is, not avowedly his own, for it was often suspected that the little ones he took up so fondly bore some relationship to him, and there can be little doubt that Selwyn, like everybody else in that evil age, had his intrigues. He did not die in his sins, and that is almost all we can say for him. He gave up gaming in time, protesting that it was the bane of four much better things—health, money, time, and thinking. For the last two, perhaps, he cared little. Before his death he is said to have been a Christian, which was a decided rarity in the fashionable set of his day. Walpole answered, when asked if he was a Freemason, that he never had been *anything*, and probably most of the men of the time would, if they had had the honesty, have said the same. They were not atheists pro-

fessedly, but they neither believed in nor practised Christianity.

His love for children has been called one of his eccentricities. It would be a hard name to give it if he had not been a club-lounger of his day. I have sufficient faith in human nature to trust that two-thirds of the men of this country have that most amiable eccentricity. But in Selwyn it amounted to something more than in the ordinary paterfamilias: it was almost a passion. He was almost motherly in his celibate tenderness to the little ones to whom he took a fancy. This affection he showed to several of the children, sons or daughters, of his friends; but to two especially, Anne Coventry and Maria Fagniani.

The former was the daughter of the beautiful Maria Gunning, who became Countess of Coventry. Nanny, as he called her, was four years old when her mother died, and from that time he treated her almost as his own child.

But Mie-Mie, as the little Italian was called, was far more favored. Whoever may have been the child's father, her mother was a rather beautiful and very immoral woman, the wife of the Marchese Fagniani. She seems to have desired to make the most for her daughter out of the extraordinary rivalry of the two English "gentlemen," and they were admirably taken in by her. Whatever the truth may have been, Selwyn's love for children showed itself more strongly in this case than in any other; and, oddly enough, it

seems to have begun when the little girl was at an age when children scarcely interest other men than their fathers—in short, in infancy. Her parents allowed him to have the sole charge of her at a very early age, when they returned to the Continent; but in 1777, the marchioness, being then in Brussels, claimed her daughter back again; though less, it seems, from any great anxiety on the child's account, than because her husband's parents, in Milan, objected to their granddaughter being left in England; and also, not a little, from fear of the voice of Mrs. Grundy. Selwyn seems to have used all kinds of arguments to retain the child; and a long correspondence took place, which the marchioness begins with, "My very dear friend," and many affectionate expressions, and concludes with a haughty "Sir," and her opinion that his conduct was "devilish." The affair was, therefore, clearly a violent quarrel, and Selwyn was obliged at last to give up the child. He had a carriage fitted up for her expressly for her journey; made out for her a list of the best hotels on her route; sent his own confidential man-servant with her, and treasured up among his "relics" the childish little notes, in a large scrawling hand, which Mie-Mie sent him. Still more curious was it to see this complete man of the world, this gambler for many years, this club-lounger, drinker, associate of well-dressed blasphemers, of Franciscans of Medmenham Abbey, devoting, not his money only, but his very time to

this mere child, leaving town in the height of the season for dull Matson, that she might have fresh air; quitting his hot club-rooms, his nights spent at the piquet-table, and the rattle of the dice, for the quiet, pleasant terraces of his country-house, where he would hold the little innocent Mie-Mie by her tiny hand, as she looked up into his shrivelled dissipated face; quitting the interchange of wit, the society of the Townshends, the Walpoles, the Williamses, the Edgecumbes, all the jovial, keen wisdom of Gilly, and Dick, and Horace, and Charles, as they called one another, for the meaningless prattle, the merry laughter of this half-English, half-Italian child. It redeems Selwyn in our eyes, and it may have done him real good: nay, he must have felt a keen refreshment in this change from vice to innocence; and we understand the misery he expressed when the old bachelor's one little companion and only pure friend was taken away from him. His love for the child was well known in London society; and of it did Sheridan's friends take advantage, when they wanted to get Selwyn out of Brookes', to prevent his black-balling the dramatist. The anecdote is given in the next memoir.

In his later days Selwyn still haunted the clubs, hanging about, sleepy, shrivelled, dilapidated in face and figure, yet still respected and dreaded by the youngsters, as the "celebrated Mr. Selwyn." The wit's disease—gout—carried him off at last, in 1791, at the age of seventy-two.

He left a fortune which was not contemptible: £33,000 of it were to go to Mie-Mie—by this time a young lady—and as the Duke of Queensberry, at his death, left her no less than £150,000, Miss was by no means a bad match for Lord Yarmouth.[1] See what a good thing it is to have three papas, when two of them are rich! The duke made Lord Yarmouth his residuary legatee, and between him and his wife divided half a million.

Let us not forget in closing this sketch of George Selwyn's life, that, gambler and reprobate as he was, he possessed some good traits, among which his love of children appears in shining colors.

[1] Afterwards the well-known and dissolute Marquis of Hertford.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.

Poor Sheridan! gambler, spendthrift, debtor, as thou wert, what is it that shakes from our hand the stone we would fling at thee? Almost, we must confess it, thy very faults; at least those qualities which seem to have been thy glory and thy ruin: which brought thee into temptation; to which, hadst thou been less brilliant, less bountiful, thou hadst never been drawn. What is it that disarms us when we review thy life, and wrings from us a tear when we should utter a reproach? Thy punishment; that bitter, miserable end; that long battling with poverty, debt, disease, all brought on by thyself; that abandonment in the hour of need, more bitter than them all; that awakening to the terrible truth of the hollowness of man and rottenness of the world! —surely this is enough: surely we may hope that a pardon followed. But now let us view thee in thy upward flight—the genius, the wit, the monarch of mind.

This great man, this wonderful genius, this eloquent senator, this most applauded dramatist was—hear it, O ye boys! and fling it triumphantly in the faces of your pedagogues—Sheridan, at your age, was a dunce!

This was the more extraordinary, inasmuch as his father, mother, and grandfather were all celebrated for their quick mental powers. The last, in fact, Dr. Sheridan, was a successful and eminent schoolmaster, the intimate friend of Dean Swift, and an author. He was an Irishman and a wit, and would seem to have been a Jacobite to boot, for he was deprived of a chaplaincy he held under Government, for preaching, on King George's birthday, a sermon having for its text "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

Sheridan's mother, again—an eccentric, extraordinary woman—wrote novels and plays; among the latter "The Discovery," which Garrick said was "one of the best comedies he ever read;" and Sheridan's father, Tom Sheridan, was famous in connection with the stage, where he was so long the rival of David Garrick.

Born of such parents in September, 1751, Richard Brinsley Sheridan was sent in due course to Harrow, where that famous old pedant, Dr. Parr, was at that time one of the masters. The doctor has himself described the lazy boy, in whose face he discovered the latent genius, and whom he attempted to inspire with a love of Greek verbs and Latin verses, by making him ashamed of his ignorance. But Richard preferred English verses and no verbs, and the Doctor failed. He did not, even at that period, cultivate elocution, of which his father was so good a master; though Dr. Parr remembered one of his sisters, on a visit to Har-

row, reciting, in accordance with her father's teaching, the well-known lines—

> "*None* but the brave,
> None but the *brave*,
> None *but* the brave deserve the fair."

But the real mind of the boy who would not be a scholar showed itself early enough. He had only just left Harrow, when he began to display his literary abilities. He had formed at school the intimate acquaintance of Halhed, afterwards a distinguished Indianist, a man of like tastes with himself; he had translated with him some of the poems of Theocritus. The two boys had revelled together in boyish dreams of literary fame—ah, those boyish dreams! so often our noblest—so seldom realized. So often, alas! the aspirations to which we can look back as our purest and best, and which make us bitterly regret that they were but dreams. And now, when young Halhed went to Oxford, and young Sheridan to join his family at Bath, they continued these ambitious projects for a time, and laid out their fancy at full usury over many a work destined never to see the fingers of a printer's devil. Among these was a farce, or rather burlesque, which shows immense promise, and which, oddly enough, resembles in its cast the famous "Critic," which followed it later. It was called "Jupiter," and turned chiefly on the story of Ixion—

> "Embracing cloud, Ixion-like—"

the lover of Juno, who caught a cold instead of the Queen of Heaven; and who, according to the classical legend, tortured for ever on a wheel, was in this production to be condemned for ever to trundle the machine of a "needy knife-grinder," amid a grand musical chorus of "razors, scissors, and penknives to grind!" This piece was amusing enough, and clever enough, though it betrayed repeatedly the youthfulness of its authors; but less so their next attempt, a weekly periodical, to be called "Hernan's Miscellany," of which Sheridan wrote, or was to write, pretty nearly the whole. None but the first number was ever completed, and perhaps we need not regret that no more followed it; but it is touching to see these two young men, both feeling their powers, confident in them, and sunning their halcyon's wings in the happy belief that they were those of the eagle, longing eagerly, earnestly, for the few poor guineas that they hoped from their work. Halhed, indeed, wrote diligently, but his colleague was not true to the contract, and though the hope of gold stimulated him—for he was poor enough—from time to time to a great effort, he was always "beginning," and never completing.

The only real product of these united labors was a volume of Epistles in verse from the Greek of a poor writer of late age, Aristænetus. This volume, which does little credit to either of its parents, was positively printed and published in 1770, but the rich harvest of fame and shillings which they expected from it was

never gathered in. Yet the book excited some little notice. The incognito of its authors induced some critics to palm it even on such a man as Dr. Johnson; others praised; others sneered at it. In the young men it raised hopes, only to dash them; but its failure was not so utter as to put the idea of literary success entirely out of their heads, nor its success sufficient to induce them to rush recklessly into print, and thus strangle their fame in its cradle. Let it fail, was Richard Sheridan's thought; he had now a far more engrossing ambition. In a word, he was in love.

Yes, he was in love for a time—only for a time, and not truly. But, be it remembered, Sheridan's evil days had not commenced. He sowed his wild oats late in life,—alack for him!—and he never finished sowing them. His was not the viciousness of nature, but the corruption of success. "In all time of wealth, good Lord deliver us!" What prayer can wild, unrestrained, unheeding Genius utter with more fervency? I own Genius is rarely in love. There is an egotism, almost a selfishness, about it, that will not stoop to such common worship. Women know it, and often prefer the blunt, honest, commonplace soldier to the wild erratic poet. Genius, grand as it is, is unsympathetic. It demands higher—the highest joys. Genius claims to be loved, but to love is too much to ask it. And yet at this time Sheridan was not a matured Genius. When his development came, he cast off this very love for which he had fought, manœuvred, struggled, and

was unfaithful to the very wife whom he had nearly died to obtain.

Miss Linley was one of a family who have been called "a nest of nightingales." Young ladies who practise elaborate pieces and sing simple ballads in the voice of a white mouse, know the name of Linley well. For ages the Linleys have been the bards of England —composers, musicians, singers, always popular, always English. Sheridan's love was one of the most renowned of the family, but the "Maid of Bath," as she was called, was as celebrated for her beauty as for the magnificence of her voice. When Sheridan first knew her, she was only sixteen years old—very beautiful, clever, and modest. She was a singer by profession, living at Bath, as Sheridan, only three years older than herself, also was, but attending concerts, oratorios, and so forth, in other places, especially at Oxford. Her adorers were legion; and the Oxford boys especially—always in love as they are—were among them. Halhed was among the last, and in the innocence of his heart confided his passion to his friend Dick Sheridan. At sixteen the young beauty began her conquests. A rich old Wiltshire squire, with a fine heart, as golden as his guineas, offered to or for her, and was readily accepted. But "Cecilia," as she was always called, could not sacrifice herself on the altar of duty, and she privately told him that though she honored and esteemed, she could never love him. The old gentleman proved his worth. Did he storm?

did he hold her to her engagement? did he shackle himself with a young wife who would only learn to hate him for his pertinacity? Not a bit of it. He acted with a generosity which should be held up as a model to all old gentlemen who are wild enough to fall in love with girls of sixteen. He knew Mr. Linley, who was delighted with the match, would be furious if it were broken off. He offered to take on himself all the blame of the breach, and, to satisfy the angry parent, settled £1000 on the daughter. The offer was accepted, and the trial for breach of promise with which the père Linley had threatened Mr. Long, was of course withheld. Mr. Long afterwards presented Mrs. Sheridan with £3000.

The "Maid of Bath" was now an heiress as well as a fascinating beauty, but her face and her voice were the chief enchantments with her ardent and youthful adorers. The Sheridans had settled in Mead Street, in that town which is celebrated for its gambling, its scandal, and its unhealthy situation at the bottom of a natural basin. Well might the Romans build their baths there: it will take more water than even Bath supplies to wash out its follies and iniquities. It certainly is strange how washing and cards go together. One would fancy there were no baths in Eden, for wherever there are baths, there we find idleness and all its attendant vices.

The Linleys were soon intimate with the Sheridans, and the Maid of Bath added to her adorers both Rich-

ard and his elder brother Charles; only, just as at Harrow every one thought Richard a dunce and he disappointed them, so at Bath no one thought Richard would fall in love, and he *did* disappoint them—none more so than Charles, his brother, and Halhed, his bosom friend. As for the latter, he was almost mad in his devotion, and certainly extravagant in his expressions. He described his passion by a clever, but rather disagreeable simile, which Sheridan, who was a most disgraceful plagiarist, though he had no need to be so, afterwards adopted as his own. "Just as the Egyptian pharmacists," wrote Halhed, in a Latin letter, in which he described the power of Miss Linley's voice over his spirit, "were wont, in embalming a dead body to draw the brain out through the ears with a crooked hook, this nightingale has drawn out through mine ears not my brain only, but my heart also."

Then among other of her devotees were Norris, the singer, and Mr. Watts, a rich gentleman-commoner, who had also met her at Oxford. Surely with such and other rivals, the chances of the quiet, unpretending, undemonstrative boy of nineteen were small. But no, Miss Linley was foolish enough to be captivated by genius, and charmed by such poems as the quiet boy wrote to her, of which this is, perhaps, one of the prettiest:—

"Dry that tear, my gentlest love;
Be hush'd that struggling sigh,

Nor seasons, day, nor fate shall prove
More fix'd, more true than I.
Hush'd be that sigh, be dry that tear;
Cease boding doubt, cease anxious fear:
Dry be that tear.

"Ask'st thou how long my love will stay,
When all that's new is past?
How long, ah, Delia, can I say
How long my life will last?
Dry be that tear, be hush'd that sigh,
At least I'll love thee till I die:
Hush'd be that sigh.

"And does that thought affect thee too,
The thought of Sylvio's death,
That he who only breath'd for you,
Must yield that faithful breath?
Hush'd be that sigh, be dry that tear,
Nor let us lose our Heaven here:
Be dry that tear."

The many adorers had not the remotest suspicion of this devotion, and "gave her" to this, that, or the other eligible personage; but the villainous conduct of a scoundrel soon brought the matter to a crisis. The whole story was as romantic as it could be. In a three-volume novel, critics, always so just and acute in their judgment, would call it far-fetched, improbable, unnatural; in short, anything but what should be the plot of the pure "domestic English story." Yet, here it is with almost dramatic effect, the simple tale of what really befel one of our most celebrated men.

Yes, to complete the fiction-like aspect of the affair, there was even a "captain" in the matter—as good a villain as ever shone in short hose and cut doublet at the "Strand" or "Victoria." Captain Matthews was a married man, and a very naughty one. He was an intimate friend of the Linleys, and wanted to push his intimacy too far. In short, "not to put too fine a point on it" (too fine a point is precisely what never *is* put), he attempted to seduce the pretty, innocent girl, and not dismayed at one failure, went on again and again. "Cecilia," knowing the temper of Linley père, was afraid to expose him to her father, and with a course which we of the present day cannot but think strange, if nothing more, disclosed the attempts of her persecutor to no other than her own lover, Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

Strange want of delicacy, undoubtedly, and yet we can excuse the poor songstress, with a father who sought only to make money out of her talents, and no other relations to confide in. But Richard Brinsley, long her lover, now resolved to be both her protector and her husband. He persuaded her to fly to France, under cover of entering a convent. He induced his sister to lend him money out of that provided for the housekeeping at home, hired a post-chaise, and sent a sedan-chair to her father's house in the Crescent to convey her to it, and wafted her off to town. Thence, after a few adroit lies on the part of Sheridan, they sailed to Dunkirk; and there he persuaded her to

become his wife. She consented, and they were knotted together by an obliging priest accustomed to these runaway matches from *la perfide Albion*.

The irate parent, Linley, followed, recaptured his daughter, and brought her back to England. Meanwhile, the elopement excited great agitation in the good city of Bath, and among others, the villain of the story, the gallant Captain Matthews, posted Richard Brinsley as "a scoundrel and a liar," the then polite method of expressing disgust. Home came Richard in the wake of Miss Linley, who rejoiced in the unromantic prænomen of "Betsy," to her angry parent, and found matters had been running high in his short absence. A duel with Matthews seems to have been the natural consequence, and up Richard posted to London to fight it. Matthews played the craven—Sheridan the impetuous lover. They met, fought, seized one another's swords, wrestled, fell together, and wounded each other with the stumps of their rapiers in true Chevy-Chase fashion. Matthews, who had behaved in a cowardly manner in the first affair, sought to retrieve his honor by sending a second challenge. Again the rivals—well represented in "The Rivals" afterwards produced—met at Kingsdown. Mr. Matthews drew; Mr. Sheridan advanced on him at first: Mr. Matthews in turn advanced fast on Mr. Sheridan; upon which he retreated, till he very suddenly ran in upon Mr. Matthews, laying himself exceedingly open, and endeavoring to get hold of

Mr. Matthews' sword. Mr. Matthews received him at point, and, I believe, disengaged his sword from Mr. Sheridan's body, and gave him another wound. The same scene was now enacted, and a *combat à l'outrance* took place, ending in mutual wounds, and fortunately no one dead.

Poor little Betsy was at Oxford when all this took place. On her return to Bath she heard something of it, and unconsciously revealed the secret of her private marriage, claiming the right of a wife to watch over her wounded husband. Then came the *dénouement.* Old Tom Sheridan rejected his son. The angry Linley would have rejected his daughter, but for her honor. Richard was sent off into Essex, and in due time the couple were legally married in England. So ended a wild, romantic affair, in which Sheridan took a desperate, but not altogether honorable, part. But the dramatist got more out of it than a pretty wife. Like all true geniuses, he employed his own experience in the production of his works, and drew from the very event of his life some hints or touches to enliven the characters of his imagination. Surely the bravado and cowardice of Captain Matthews, who on the first meeting in the Park is described as finding all kinds of difficulties in the way of their fighting, objecting now to the ground as unlevel, now to the presence of a stranger, who turns out to be an officer, and very politely moves off when requested, who, in short, delays the event as long as possible, must have supplied

the idea of Bob Acres; while the very conversations, of which we have no record, may have given him some of those hints of character which made "The Rivals" so successful. That play—his first—was written in 1774. It failed on its first appearance, owing to the bad acting of the part of Sir Lucius O'Trigger by Mr. Lee; but when another actor was substituted, the piece was at once successful, and acted with overflowing houses all over the country. How could it be otherwise? It may have been exaggerated, far-fetched, unnatural, but such characters as Sir Anthony Absolute, Sir Lucius, Bob Acres, Lydia Languish, and most of all Mrs. Malaprop, so admirably conceived, and so carefully and ingeniously worked out, could not but be admired. They have become household words; they are even now our standard of ridicule, and, be they natural or not, these last eighty years have changed the world so little that Malaprops and Acreses may be found in the range of almost any man's experience and in every class of society.

Sheridan and his divine Betsy were now living in their own house, in that dull little place, Orchard Street, Portman Square, then an aristocratic neighborhood, and he was diligent in the production of essays, pamphlets, and farces, many of which never saw the light, while others fell flat, or were not calculated to bring him any fame. What great authors have not experienced the same disappointments? What men would ever be great if they allowed such checks to

damp their energy, or were turned back by them from the course in which they feel that their power lies?

But his next work, the opera of "The Duenna," had a yet more signal success, and a run of no less than seventy-five nights at Covent Garden, which put Garrick at Drury Lane to his wit's end to know how to compete with it. Old Linley himself composed the music for it; and to show how thus a family could hold the stage, Garrick actually played off the mother against the son, and revived Mrs. Sheridan's comedy of "The Discovery" to compete with Richard Sheridan's "Duenna."

The first night "The Rivals" was brought out at Bath came Sheridan's father, who, as we have seen, had refused to have anything to say to his son. It is related as an instance of Richard's filial affection, that during the representation he placed himself behind a side-scene opposite to the box in which his father and sisters sat, and gazed at them all the time. When he returned to his house and wife, he burst into tears, and declared that he felt it too bitter that he alone should have been forbidden to speak to those on whom he had been gazing all the night.

During the following year this speculative man, who married on nothing but his brain, and had no capital, no wealthy friends, in short nothing whatever, suddenly appears in the most mysterious manner as a capitalist, and lays down his £10,000 in the coolest and quietest manner. And for what? For a share in the pur-

chase of Garrick's moiety of the patent of Drury Lane. The whole property was worth £70,000; Garrick sold his half for £35,000, of which old Mr. Linley contributed £10,000, Dr. Ford £15,000, and penniless Sheridan the balance. Where he got the money nobody knew, and apparently nobody asked. It was paid, and he entered at once on the business of proprietor of that old house, where so many a Roscius has strutted and declaimed with more or less fame; so many a walking gentleman done his five shillings' worth of polite comedy, so many a tinsel king degraded the "legitimate drama," in the most illegitimate manner, and whose glories were extinguished with the reign of Macready, when we were boys, *nous autres*.

The first piece he contributed to this stage was "A Trip to Scarborough," which was only a species of "family edition" of Vanbrugh's play, "The Relapse;" but in 1777 he reached the acme of his fame, in "The School for Scandal."

But alack and alas for these sensual days, when it is too much trouble to think, and people go to the play, if they go at all, to feast their eyes and ears, not their minds! Can any sensible person believe that if "The School for Scandal," teeming as it does with wit, satire, and character, finer and truer than in any play produced since the days of Ben Jonson, Massinger, and Marlowe, were set on the boards of the Haymarket at this day, as a new piece by an author of no very high celebrity, it would draw away a single admirer from

the flummery in Oxford Street, the squeaking at Covent Garden, or the broad, exaggerated farce at the Adelphi or Olympic? No: it may still have its place on the London stage when well acted, but it owes that to its ancient celebrity, and it can never compete with the tinsel and tailoring which alone can make even Shakespeare go down with a modern audience.

In those days of Garrick, on the other hand, those glorious days of true histrionic art, high and low were not ashamed to throng Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and make the appearance of a new play the great event of the season. Hundreds were turned away from the doors when "The School for Scandal" was acted, and those who were fortunate enough to get in made the piece the subject of conversation in society for many a night, passing keen comment on every scene, every line, every word almost, and using their minds as we now use our eyes.

This brilliant play, the earliest idea of which was derived from its author's experience of the gossip of that kettle of scandal and backbiting, Bath, where, if no other commandment were ever broken, the constant breach of the ninth would suffice to put it on a level with certain condemned cities we have somewhere read of, won for Sheridan a reputation of which he at once felt the value, and made his purchase of a share in the property of Old Drury, for the time being, a successful speculation. It produced a result which his

good heart perhaps valued even more than the guineas which now flowed in; it induced his father, who had long been at war with him, to seek a reconciliation, and the elder Sheridan actually became manager of the theatre of which his son was part proprietor.

Old Tom Sheridan had always been a proud man, and when once he was offended, was hard to bring round again. His quarrel with Johnson was an instance of this. In 1762 the Doctor, hearing they had given Sheridan a pension of two hundred a year, exclaimed, "What! have they given *him* a pension? then it is time for me to give up mine." A "kind friend" took care to repeat the peevish exclamation, without adding what Johnson had said immediately afterwards, "However, I am glad that they have given Mr. Sheridan a pension, for he is a very good man." The actor was disgusted; and, though Boswell interfered, declined to be reconciled. On one occasion he even rushed from a house at which he was to dine, when he heard that the great Samuel had been invited. The Doctor had little opinion of Sheridan's declamation. "Besides, sir," said he, "what influence can Mr. Sheridan have upon the language of this great country by his narrow exertions? Sir, it is burning a farthing candle at Dover to show light at Calais." Still, when Garrick attacked his rival, Johnson nobly defended him. "No, sir," he said, "there is to be sure, in Sheridan, something to reprehend, and everything to laugh at; but, sir, he is not a bad man.

No, sir; were mankind to be divided into good and bad, he would stand considerably within the ranks of the good."

However, the greatest bully of his age (and the kindest-hearted man) thought very differently of the son. Richard Brinsley had written a prologue to Savage's play of "Sir Thomas Overbury"—

> "Ill-fated Savage, at whose birth was giv'n
> No parent but the Muse, no friend but Heav'n;"

and in this had paid an elegant compliment to the great lexicographer, winding up with these lines:—

> "So pleads the tale that gives to future times
> The son's misfortunes and the parent's crimes;
> There shall his fame, if own'd to-night, survive,
> Fix'd *by the hand that bids our language live*—"

referring at once to Johnson's life of his friend Savage and to his great Dictionary. It was Savage, every one remembers, with whom Johnson in his days of starvation was wont to walk the streets all night, neither of them being able to pay for a lodging, and with whom, walking one night round and round St. James's Square, he kept up his own and his companion's spirits by inveighing against the minister and declaring that they would "stand by their country."

Doubtless the Doctor felt as much pleasure at the meed awarded to his old companion in misery as at the high compliment to himself. Anyhow, he pronounced that Sheridan "had written the two best comedies of

his age," and therefore proposed him as a member of the Literary Club.

This celebrated gathering of wit and whimsicality, founded by Johnson himself in conjunction with Sir J. Reynolds, was the Helicon of London Letters, and the temple which the greatest talker of his age had built for himself, and in which he took care to be duly worshipped. It met at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street, Soho, every Friday; and from seven in the evening to almost any hour of night was the scene of such talk, mainly on literature and learning, as has never been heard since in this country. It consisted at this period of twenty-six members, and there is scarcely one among them whose name is not known to-day as well as any in the history of our literature. Besides the high priests, Reynolds and Johnson, there came Edmund Burke, Fox, Sheridan, and many another of less note, to represent the senate: Goldsmith, Gibbon, Adam Smith, Malone, Dr. Burney, Percy, Nugent, Sir William Jones, three Irish bishops, and a host of others, crowded in from the ranks of learning and literature. Garrick and George Colman found here an indulgent audience; and the light portion of the company comprised such men as Topham Beauclerk, Bennet Langton, Vesey, and a dozen of lords and baronets. In short, they were picked men, and if their conversation was not always witty, it was because they all had wit and frightened one another.

Among them the bullying Doctor rolled in majestic

grumpiness; scolded, dogmatized, contradicted, pished and pshawed, and made himself generally disagreeable; yet, hail the omen, Intellect! such was the force, such the fame of his mind, that the more he snorted, the more they adored him—the more he bullied, the more humbly they knocked under. He was quite "His Majesty" at the Turk's Head, and the courtiers waited for his coming with anxiety, and talked of him till he came in the same manner as the lacqueys in the anteroom of a crowned monarch. Boswell, who, by the way, was also a member—of course he was, or how should we have had the great man's conversation handed down to us?—was sure to keep them up to the proper mark of adulation if they ever flagged in it, and was as servile in his admiration in the Doctor's absence as when he was there to call him a fool for his pains.

Thus, on one occasion while "King Johnson" tarried, the courtiers were discussing his journey to the Hebrides and his coming away "willing to believe the second sight." Some of them smiled at this, but Bozzy was down on them with more than usual servility. "He is only *willing* to believe," he exclaimed. "*I do* believe. The evidence is enough for me, though not for his great mind. What will not fill a quart bottle will fill a pint bottle. I am filled with belief." —"Are you?" said Colman, slyly; "then cork it up."

As a specimen of Johnson's pride in his own club, which always remained extremely exclusive, we have

what he said of Garrick, who, before he was elected, carelessly told Reynolds he liked the club, and thought "he would be of them."

"*He'll be of us!*" roared the doctor indignantly, on hearing of this. "How does he know we will *permit* him? The first duke in England has no right to hold such language!"

It can be easily imagined that when "His Majesty" expressed his approval of Richard Brinsley, then a young man of eight-and-twenty, there was no one who ventured to blackball him, and so Sheridan was duly elected.

The fame of "The School for Scandal" was a substantial one for Richard Brinsley, and in the following year he extended his speculation by buying the other moiety of Drury Lane. This theatre, which took its name from the old Cockpit Theatre in Drury Lane, where Killigrew acted in the days of Charles II., is famous for the number of times it has been rebuilt. The first house had been destroyed in 1674; and the one in which Garrick acted was built by Sir Christopher Wren and opened with a prologue by Dryden. In 1793 this was rebuilt. In 1809 it was burnt to the ground; and on its re-opening the Committee advertised a prize for a prologue, which was supposed to be tried for by all the poets and poetasters then in England,[1] Sheridan adding afterwards a condition

[1] None of the addresses sent in having given satisfaction, Lord Byron was requested to write one, which he did.

that he wanted an address without a Phœnix in it. Horace Smith and his brother seized the opportunity to parody the style of the most celebrated in their delightful "Rejected Addresses." Drury Lane has always been grand in its prologue, for besides Dryden and Byron, it could boast of Sam Johnson, who wrote the address when Garrick opened the theatre in 1747. No theatre ever had more great names connected with its history.

It was in 1778, after the purchase of the other moiety of this property, that Sheridan set on its boards "The Critic." Though this was denounced as itself as complete a plagiarism as any Sir Fretful Plagiary could make, and though undoubtedly the idea of it was borrowed, its wit, so truly Sheridanian, and its complete characters, enhanced its author's fame, in spite of the disappointment of those who expected higher things from the writer of "The School for Scandal." Whether Sheridan would have gone on improving had he remained true to the drama, "The Critic" leaves us in doubt. But he was a man of higher ambition. Step by step, unexpectedly, and apparently unprepared, he had taken by storm the outworks of the citadel he was determined to capture, and he seems to have cared little to garrison these minor fortresses. He had carried off from among a dozen suitors a wife of such beauty that Walpole thus writes of her in 1773:—

"I was at the ball last night, and have only been

at the opera, where I was infinitely struck with the Carrara, who is the prettiest creature upon earth. Mrs. Hartley I find still handsomer, and Miss Linley is to be the superlative degree. The king admires the last, and ogles her as much as he dares in so holy a place as an oratorio, and at so devout a service as Alexander's Feast."

Yet Sheridan did not prize his lovely wife as he should have done, when he had once obtained her. Again he had struck boldly into the drama, and in four years had achieved the name of a play-writer to which even Johnson could testify so handsomely. He now quitted this, and with the same innate power—the same consciousness of success—the same readiness of genius—took a higher, far more brilliant flight than ever. Yet had he garrisoned the forts he captured, he would have been a better, happier, and more prosperous man. Had he been true to the Maid of Bath, his character would not have degenerated as it did. Had he kept up his connection with the drama, he would not have lost so largely by his speculation in Drury Lane. His genius became his temptation, and he hurried on to triumph and to fall.

Public praise is a siren which the young sailor through life cannot resist. Political life is a fine aim, even when its seeker starts without a shred of real patriotism to conceal his personal ambition. No young man with any character can think, without a thrill of rapture, on the glory of having *his* name—now obscure

—written in capitals on the page of his country's history. A true patriot cares nothing for fame; a really great man is content to die nameless, if his acts may but survive him. Sheridan was not really great, and it may be doubted if he had any sincerity in his political views. But the period favored the rise of young men of genius. In former reigns a man could have little hope of political influence without being first a courtier; but by this time liberalism had made giant strides. The leaven of revolutionary ideas, which had leavened the whole lump in France, was still working quietly and less passionately in this country, and being less repressed, displayed itself in the last quarter of the eighteenth century in the form of a strong and brilliant opposition. It was to this that the young men of ambition attached themselves, rallying under the standard of Charles James Fox, since it was there only that their talents were sufficient to recommend them.

To this party, Sheridan, laughing in his sleeve at the extravagance of their demands—so that when they clamored for a "Parliament once a year, or oftener if need be," he pronounced himself an "Oftener-if-need-be" man—was introduced, when his fame as a literary man had brought him into contact with some of its hangers-on. Fox, after his first interview with him, affirmed that he had always thought Hare and Charles Townshend the wittiest men he had ever met, but that Sheridan surpassed them both; and

Sheridan was equally pleased with "the Man of the People."

The first step to this political position was to become a member of a certain club, where its leaders gambled away their money, and drank away their minds—to wit, Brookes'. Pretty boys, indeed, were these great Whig patriots when turned loose in these precincts! The tables were for stakes of twenty or fifty guineas, but soon ran up to hundreds. What did it matter to Charles James Fox, to the Man of the People, whether he lost five, seven, or ten thousand of a night, when the one-half came out of his father's, the other out of Hebrew, pockets—the sleek, thick-lipped owners of which thronged his Jerusalem chamber, as he called his back sitting-room, only too glad to "oblige" him to any amount? The range for gaming at this pandemonium may be understood from a rule of the club, which it was found necessary to make, to interdict it *in the eating-room*, but to which was added the truly British exception, which allowed two members of Parliament in those days, or two "gentlemen" of any kind, to *toss up* for what they had ordered.

This charming resort of the dissipated was originally established in Pall Mall in 1764, and the manager was that same Almack who afterwards opened a lady's club in the rooms now called Willis's, in King Street, St. James's; who also owned the famous Thatched House, and whom Gilly Williams described as having a "Scotch face, in a tag-wig," waiting on the ladies at

supper. In 1778 Brookes—a wine-merchant and money-lender, whom Tickell, in his famous "Epistle from the Hon. Charles Fox, partridge-shooting, to the Hon. John Townsend, cruising," describes in these lines:—

> "And know I've bought the best champagne from Brookes,
> From liberal Brookes, whose speculative skill
> Is hasty credit, and a distant bill:
> Who, nurs'd in clubs, disdains a vulgar trade;
> Exults to trust, and blushes to be paid—"

built and opened the present club-house in St. James's Street, and thither the members of Almack's migrated. Brookes' speculative skill, however, did not make him a rich man, and the "gentlemen" he dealt with were perhaps too gentlemanly to pay him. He died poor in 1782. Almack's at first consisted of twenty-seven members, one of whom was C. J. Fox. Gibbon, the historian, was actually a member of it, and says that in spite of the rage for play, he found the society there rational and entertaining. Sir Joshua Reynolds wanted to be a member of it too. "You see," says Topham Beauclerk thereupon, "what noble ambition will make a man attempt. That den is not yet opened," etc.

Brookes', however, was far more celebrated, and besides Fox, Reynolds, and Gibbon, there were here to be found Horace Walpole, David Hume, Burke, Selwyn, and Garrick. It would be curious to discover how much religion, how much morality, and how much vanity there were among the set. The

first two would require a miscroscope to examine, the last an ocean to contain it. But let Tickell describe its inmates:—

"Soon as to Brookes's thence thy footsteps bend
What gratulations thy approach attend!
See Gibbon rap his box—auspicious sign,
That classic compliment and wit combine;
See Beauclerk's cheek a tinge of red surprise,
And friendship give what cruel health denies;
* * * * *
Of wit, of taste, of fancy we'll debate,
If Sheridan for once be not too late.
But scarce a thought on politics we'll spare
Unless on Polish politics with Hare.
Good-natured Devon! oft shall there appear
The cool complacence of thy friendly sneer;
Oft shall Fitzpatrick's wit, and Stanhope's ease,
And Burgoyne's manly sense combine to please."

To show how high gaming ran in this assembly of wits, even so early as 1772, there is a memorandum in the books, stating that Mr. Thynne retired from the club in disgust, because he had only won £12,000 in two months. The principal games at this period were quinze and faro.

Into this eligible club Richard Sheridan, who ten years before had been agreeing with Halhed on the bliss of making a couple of hundred pounds by their literary exertions, now essayed to enter as a member; but in vain. One black-ball sufficed to nullify his election, and that one was dropped in by George

Selwyn, who, with degrading littleness, would not have the son of an actor among them. Again and again he made the attempt; again and again Selwyn foiled him; and it was not till 1780 that he succeeded. The Prince of Wales was then his devoted friend, and was determined he should be admitted into the club. The elections at that time took place between eleven at night and one o'clock in the morning, and the "greatest gentleman in Europe" took care to be in the hall when the ballot began. Selwyn came down as usual, bent on triumph. The prince called him to him. There was nothing for it; Selwyn was forced to obey. The prince walked him up and down the hall, engaging him in an apparently most important conversation. George Selwyn answered him question after question, and made desperate attempts to slip away. The other George had always something more to say to him. The long finger of the clock went round, and Selwyn's long white fingers were itching for the black ball. The prince was only more and more interested, the wit only more and more abstracted. Never was the young George more lively, or the other more silent. But it was all in vain. The finger of the clock went round and round, and at last the members came out noisily from the balloting-room, and the smiling faces of the prince's friends showed to the unhappy Selwyn that his enemy had been elected.

So, at least, runs one story. The other, told by Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, is perhaps more probable. It ap-

pears that the Earl of Besborough was no less opposed to his election than George Selwyn, and these two individuals agreed at any cost of comfort to be always at the club at the time of the ballot to throw in their black balls. On the night of his success, Lord Besborough was there as usual, and Selwyn was at his rooms in Cleveland Row, preparing to come to the club. Suddenly a chairman rushed into Brookes' with an important note for my lord, who, on tearing it open, found to his horror that it was from his daughter-in-law, Lady Duncannon, announcing that his house in Cavendish Square was on fire, and imploring him to come immediately. Feeling confident that his fellow-conspirator would be true to his post, the earl set off at once. But almost the same moment Selwyn received a message informing him that his adopted daughter, of whom he was very fond, was seized with an alarming illness. The ground was cleared; and by the time the earl returned, having, it is needless to say, found his house in a perfect state of security, and was joined by Selwyn, whose daughter had never been better in her life, the actor's son was elected, and the conspirators found they had been duped.

But it is far easier in this country to get into that House, where one has to represent the interests of thousands, and take a share in the government of a nation, than to be admitted to a club where one has but to lounge, to gamble, and to eat dinner; and

Sheridan was elected for the town of Stafford with probably little more artifice than the old and stale one of putting five-pound notes under voters' glasses, or paying thirty pounds for a home-cured ham. Whether he bribed or not, a petition was presented against his election, almost as a matter of course in those days, and his maiden speech was made in defence of the good burgesses of that quiet little county-town. After making this speech, which was listened to in silence on account of his reputation as a dramatic author, but which does not appear to have been very wonderful, he rushed up to the gallery, and eagerly asked his friend Woodfall what he thought of it. That candid man shook his head, and told him oratory was not his forte. Sheridan leaned his head on his hand a moment, and then exclaimed with vehement emphasis, "It is in me, however, and, by Heaven! it shall come out."

He spoke prophetically, yet not as the great man who determines to conquer difficulties, but rather as one who feels conscious of his own powers, and knows that they must show themselves sooner or later. Sheridan found himself laboring under the same natural obstacles as Demosthenes—though in a less degree—a thick and disagreeable tone of voice; but we do not find in the indolent but gifted Englishman that admirable perseverance, that conquering zeal, which enabled the Athenian to turn these very impediments to his own advantage. He did, indeed, prepare his speeches,

and at times had fits of that same diligence which he had displayed in the preparation of "The School for Scandal;" but his indolent, self-indulgent mode of life left him no time for such steady devotion to oratory as might have made him the finest speaker of his age, for perhaps his natural abilities were greater than those of Pitt, Fox, or even Burke, though his education was inferior to that of those two statesmen.

From this time Sheridan's life had two phases—that of a politician, and that of a man of the world. With the former we have nothing to do in such a memoir as this, and indeed it is difficult to say whether it was in oratory, the drama, or wit that he gained the greatest celebrity. There is, however, some difference between the three capacities. On the mimic stage, and on the stage of the country, his fame rested on a very few grand outbursts—some matured, prepared, deliberated—others spontaneous. He left only three great comedies, and perhaps we may say only one really grand. In the same way he made only two great speeches, or perhaps we may say only one. His wit, on the other hand—though that too is said to have been studied—was the constant accompaniment of his daily life, and Sheridan has not left two or three celebrated bon-mots, but a hundred.

But even in his political career his wit, which must then have been spontaneous, won him almost as much fame as his eloquence, which he seems to have reserved for great occasions. He was the wit of the House.

Wit, ridicule, satire, quiet, cool, and easy sneers, always made in good temper, and always therefore the more bitter, were his weapons, and they struck with unerring accuracy. At that time—nor at that time only—the "Den of Thieves," as Cobbett called our senate, was a cockpit as vulgar and personal as the present Congress of the United States. Party-spirit meant more than it has ever done since, and scarcely less than it had meant when the throne itself was the stake for which parties played some forty years before. There was, in fact a substantial personal centre for each side. The one party rallied round a respectable but maniac monarch, whose mental afflictions took the most distressing form, the other round his gay, handsome, dissolute—nay disgusting—son, at once his rival and his heir. The spirit of each party was therefore personal, and their attacks on one another were more personal than anything we can imagine in the present day in so respectably ridiculous a conclave as the House of Commons. It was little for one honorable gentleman to give another honorable gentleman the lie direct before the eyes of the country. The honorable gentlemen descended—or, as they thought, ascended—to the most vehement invective, and such was at times the torrent of personal abuse which parties heaped on one another, while good-natured John Bull looked on and smiled at his rulers, that, as in the United States of to-day, a debate was often the prelude to a duel. Pitt and Fox, Tierney, Adam, Fullarton, Lord George

Germain, Lord Shelburne, and Governor Johnstone, all "vindicated their honor," as the phrase went, by "coffee and pistols for four." If Sheridan had not to repeat the Bob Acres scene with Captain Matthews, it was only because his wonderful good humor could put up with a great deal that others thought could only be expiated by a hole in the waistcoat.

In the administration of the Marquis of Rockingham the dramatist enjoyed the pleasures of office for less than a year as one of the Under Secretaries of State in 1782. In the next year we find him making a happy retort on Pitt, who had somewhat vulgarly alluded to his being a dramatic author. It was on the American question, perhaps the bitterest that ever called forth the acrimony of parties in the House. Sheridan from boyhood had been taunted with being the son of an actor. One can hardly credit this fact, just after Garrick had raised the profession of an actor to so great an eminence in the social scale. He had been called "the player-boy" at school, and his election at Brookes' had been opposed on the same grounds. It was evidently his bitterest point, and Pitt probably knew this when, in replying to a speech of the ex-dramatist's, he said that "no man admired more than he did the abilities of that right honorable gentleman, the elegant sallies of his thought, the gay effusion of his fancy, his *dramatic* turns, and his epigrammatic point; and if they were reserved for the *proper stage*, they would, no doubt, receive what the hon. gentleman's

abilities always did receive, the plaudits of the audience; and it would be his fortune *sui plausu gaudere theatri.* But this was not the proper scene for the exhibition of those elegancies." This was vulgar in Pitt, and probably every one felt so. But Sheridan rose, cool and collected, and quietly replied:—

"On the particular sort of personality which the right hon. gentleman has thought proper to make use of, I need not make any comment. The propriety, the taste, the gentlemanly point of it, must have been obvious to the House. But let me assure the right hon. gentleman that I do now, and will at any time he chooses to repeat this sort of allusion, meet it with the most sincere good humor. Nay, I will say more: flattered and encouraged by the right hon. gentleman's panegyric on my talents, if ever I again engage in the compositions he alludes to, I may be tempted to an act of presumption—to attempt an improvement on one of Ben Jonson's best characters, the character of the *Angry Boy*, in the 'Alchemist.'"

The fury of Pitt, contrasted with the coolness of the man he had so shamefully attacked, made this sally irresistible, and from that time neither "the angry boy" himself, nor any of his colleagues, were anxious to twit Sheridan on his dramatic pursuits.

Pitt wanted to lay a tax on every horse that started in a race. Lord Surrey, a *turfish* individual of the day, proposed one of five pounds on the winner. Sheridan, rising, told his lordship that the next time he visited

Newmarket he would probably be greeted with the line:—

"Jockey of Norfolk, be not so bold——."

Lord Rolle, the butt of the Opposition, who had attacked him in the famous satire, "The Rolliad," so popular that it went through twenty-two editions in twenty-seven years, accused Sheridan of inflammatory speeches among the operatives of the northern counties on the cotton question. Sheridan retorted by saying that he believed Lord Rolle must refer to "compositions less prosaic, but more popular" (meaning the "Rolliad"), and thus successfully turned the laugh against him.

It was Grattan, I think, who said, "When I can't talk sense, I talk metaphor." Sheridan often talked metaphor, though he sometimes mingled it with sense. His famous speech about the Begums of Oude is full of it, but we have one or two instances before that. Thus on the Duke of Richmond's report about fortifications, he said, turning to the duke, that "holding in his hand the report made by the Board of Officers, he complimented the noble president on his talents as an *engineer*, which were strongly evinced in planning and constructing that very paper. . . . . He has made it a contest of posts, and conducted his reasoning not less on principles of trigonometry than of logic. There are certain assumptions thrown up, like advanced works, to keep the enemy at a distance from the prin-

cipal object of debate; strong provisos protect and cover the flanks of his assertions, his very queries are his casemates," and so on.

When Lord Mulgrave said, on another occasion, that any man using his influence to obtain a vote from the crown *ought* to lose his head, Sheridan quietly remarked, that he was glad his lordship had said "*ought* to lose his head," not *would* have lost it, for in that case the learned gentleman would not have had that evening "a *face* to have shown among us."

Such are a few of his well-remembered replies in the House; but his fame as an orator rested on the splendid speeches which he made at the impeachment of Warren Hastings. The first of these were made in the House on the 7th of February, 1787. The whole story of the corruption, extortions, and cruelty of the worst of many bad rulers who have been imposed upon that unhappy nation of Hindostan, and who, ignorant how to *parcere subjectis*, have gone on in their unjust oppression, only rendering it the more dangerous by weak concessions, is too well known to need a recapitulation here. The worst feature in the whole of Hastings' misconduct was, perhaps, his treatment of those unfortunate ladies whose money he coveted, the Begums of Oude. The Opposition was determined to make the governor-general's conduct a state question, but their charges had been received with little attention, till on this day Sheridan rose to denounce the cruel extortioner. He spoke for five hours and a

half, and surpassed all he had ever said in eloquence. The subject was one to find sympathy in the hearts of Englishmen, who, though they beat their own wives, are always indignant at a man who dares to lay a little finger on those of anybody else. Then, too, the subject was Oriental: it might even be invested with something of romance and poetry; the zenanah, sacred in the eyes of the oppressed natives, had been ruthlessly insulted; under a glaring Indian sun, amid the luxuriance of Indian foliage, these acts had been committed, etc. etc. It was a fertile theme for a poet; and how little soever Sheridan cared for the Begums and their wrongs—and that he did care little appears from what he afterwards said of Hastings himself—he could evidently make a telling speech out of the theme, and he did so. Walpole says that he turned everybody's head. "One heard everybody in the street raving on the wonders of that speech; for my part, I cannot believe it was so supernatural as they say." He affirms that there must be a witchery in Mr. Sheridan, who had no diamonds—as Hastings had—to win favor with, and says that the Opposition may be fairly charged with sorcery. Burke declared the speech to be "the most astonishing effort of eloquence, argument, and wit united, of which there was any record or tradition." Fox affirmed that "all he had ever heard, all he had ever read, when compared with it, dwindled into nothing, and vanished like vapor before the sun." But these were partisans. Even Pitt acknowledged "that

it surpassed all the eloquence of ancient and modern times, and possessed everything that genius or art could furnish to agitate and control the human mind." One member confessed himself so unhinged by it that he moved an adjournment, because he could not, in his then state of mind, give an unbiassed vote. But the highest testimony was that of Logan, the defender of Hastings. At the end of the first hour of the speech, he said to a friend, "All this is declamatory assertion without proof." Another hour's speaking, and he muttered, "This is a most wonderful oration!" A third, and he confessed "Mr. Hastings has acted very unjustifiably." At the end of the fourth he exclaimed, "Mr. Hastings is a most atrocious criminal." And before the speaker had sat down, he vehemently protested that "Of all monsters of iniquity, the most enormous is Warren Hastings."

Such in those days was the effect of eloquence; an art which has been eschewed in the present House of Commons, and which our newspapers affect to think is much out of place in an assembly met for calm deliberation. Perhaps they are right; but oh! for the golden words of a Sheridan, a Fox, even a Pitt and Burke.

It is said, though not proved, that on this same night of Sheridan's glory in the House of Commons, his "School for Scandal" was acted with "rapturous applause" at Covent Garden, and his "Duenna" no less successfully at Drury Lane. What a pitch of glory for the dunce who had been shamed into learn-

ing Greek verbs at Harrow! Surely Dr. Parr must then have confessed that a man can be great without the classics—nay, without even a decent English education, for Sheridan knew comparatively little of history and literature, certainly less than the men against whom he was pitted or whose powers he emulated. He had been known to say to his friends, when asked to take part with them on some important question, "You know I'm an ignoramus—instruct me and I'll do my best." He had even to rub up his arithmetic when he thought he had some chance of being made Chancellor of the Exchequer; but perhaps many a statesman before and after him has done as much as that.

No wonder that after such a speech in the House, the celebrated trial which commenced in the beginning of the following year should have roused the attention of the whole nation. The proceedings opened in Westminster Hall, the noblest room in England, on the 13th of February, 1788. The Queen and four of her daughters were seated in the Duke of Newcastle's box; the Prince of Wales walked in at the head of a hundred and fifty peers of the realm. The spectacle was imposing enough. But the trial proceeded slowly for some months, and it was not till the 3d of June that Sheridan rose to make his second great speech on this subject.

The excitement was then at its highest. Two-thirds of the peers with the peeresses and their daughters

were present, and the whole of the vast hall was crowded to excess. The sun shone in brightly to light up the gloomy building, and the whole scene was splendid. Such was the enthusiasm that people paid *fifty guineas* for a ticket to hear the first orator of his day, for such he then was. The actor's son felt the enlivening influence of a full audience. He had been long preparing for this moment, and he threw into his speech all the theatrical effect of which he had studied much and inherited more. He spoke for many hours on the 3d, 5th, and 6th, and concluded with these words:

"They (the House of Commons) exhort you by everything that calls sublimely upon the heart of man, by the majesty of that justice which this bold man has libelled, by the wide fame of your own tribunal, by the sacred pledges by which you swear in the solemn hour of decision, knowing that that decision will then bring you the highest reward that ever blessed the heart of man, the consciousness of having done the greatest act of mercy for the world that the earth has ever yet received from any hand but heaven!—My Lords, I have done."

Sheridan's valet was very proud of his master's success, and as he had been to hear the speech, was asked what part he considered the finest. Plush replied by putting himself into his master's attitude, and imitating his voice admirably, solemnly uttering, "My Lords, I have done!" He should have added the word "noth-

ing." Sheridan's eloquence had no more effect than the clear proof of Hastings' guilt, and the impeachment, as usual, was but a troublesome subterfuge, to satisfy the Opposition and dust the eyeballs of the country.

Sheridan's great speech was made. The orator has concluded his oration; his fame was complete, and no more was wanted. Adieu, then, blue-books and parties, and come on the last grand profession of this man of many talents—that of the wit. That it was a profession there can be no doubt, for he lived on it, it was all his capital. He paid his bills in that coin alone: he paid his workmen, his actors, carpenters, builders with no more sterling metal; with that ready tool he extracted loans from the very men who came to be paid; that brilliant ornament maintained his reputation in the senate, and his character in society. But wit without wisdom—the froth without the fluid—the capital without the pillar—is but a poor fortune, a wretched substitute for real worth and honest utility. For a time men forgave to Mr. Sheridan—extravagant and reckless as he was—what would long before have brought an honester, better, but less amusing man to a debtor's prison and the contempt of society; but only for a time was this career possible.

Sheridan has now reached the pinnacle of his fame, and from this point we have to trace that decline which ended so awfully.

Whilst we call him a dishonest man, we must not be

supposed to imply that he was so in heart. It is pleaded for him that he tricked his creditors "for the fun of the thing," like a modern Robin Hood; and like that forester bold, he was mightily generous with other men's money. Deception is deception, whether in sport or earnest, and Sheridan, no doubt, made it a very profitable employment. He had always a taste for the art of duping, and he had begun early in life—soon after leaving Harrow. He was spending a few days at Bristol, and wanted a pair of new boots, but could not afford to pay for them. Shortly before he left, he called on two bootmakers, and ordered of each a pair, promising payment on delivery. He fixed the morning of his departure for the tradesmen to send in their goods. When the first arrived he tried on the boots, complaining that that for the *right* foot pinched a little, and ordered Crispin to take it back, stretch it, and bring it again at nine the next morning. The second arrived soon after, and this time it was the boot for the *left* foot which pinched. Same complaint; same order given; each had taken away only the pinching boot, and left the other behind. The same afternoon Sheridan left in his new boots for town, and when the two shoemakers called at nine the next day, each with a boot in his hand, we can imagine their disgust at finding how neatly they had been duped.

Anecdotes of this kind swarm in every account of Richard Sheridan—many of them, perhaps, quite apocryphal, others exaggerated, or attributed to this

noted trickster, but all tending to show how completely he was master of this high art. His ways of eluding creditors used to delight me, I remember, when an Oxford boy, and they are only paralleled by Oxford stories. One of these may not be generally known, and was worthy of Sheridan. Every Oxonian knows Hall, the boat-builder at Folly Bridge. Mrs. Hall was, in my time, proprietress of those dangerous skiffs and nutshell canoes which we young harebrains delighted to launch on the Isis. Some youthful Sheridanian had a long account with this elderly and bashful personage, who had applied in vain for her money, till, coming one day to his rooms, she announced her intention not to leave till the money was paid. "Very well, Mrs. Hall, then you must sit down and make yourself comfortable while I dress, for I am going out directly." Mrs. H. sat down composedly, and with equal composure the youth took off his coat. Mrs. H. was not abashed, but in another moment the debtor removed his waistcoat also. Mrs. H. was still immovable. Sundry other articles of dress followed, and the good lady began to be nervous. "Now, Mrs. Hall, you can stay if you like, but I assure you that I am going to change *all* my dress." Suiting the action to the word, he began to remove his lower garments, when Mrs. Hall, shocked and furious, rushed from the room.

This reminds us of Sheridan's treatment of a female creditor. He had for some years hired his carriage-

horses from Edbrooke in Clarges Street, and his bill was a heavy one. Mrs. Edbrooke wanted a new bonnet, and blew up her mate for not insisting on payment. The curtain lecture was followed next day by a refusal to allow Mr. Sheridan to have the horses till the account was settled. Mr. Sheridan sent the politest possible message in reply, begging that Mrs. Edbrooke would allow his coachman to drive her in his own carriage to his door, and promising that the matter should be satisfactorily arranged. The good woman was delighted, dressed in her best, and, bill in hand, entered the M. P.'s chariot. Sheridan meanwhile had given orders to his servants. Mrs. Edbrooke was shown up into the back drawing-room, where a slight luncheon, of which she was begged to partake, was laid out; and she was assured that her debtor would not keep her waiting long, though for the moment engaged. The horse-dealer's wife sat down and discussed a wing of chicken and glass of wine, and in the mean time her victimizer had been watching his opportunity, slipped down stairs, jumped into the vehicle, and drove off. Mrs. Edbrooke finished her lunch and waited in vain; ten minutes, twenty, thirty, passed, and then she rang the bell: "Very sorry, ma'am, but Mr. Sheridan went out on important business half an hour ago."—"And the carriage?"—"Oh, ma'am, Mr. Sheridan never walks."

He procured his wine in the same style. Chalier, the wine-merchant, was his creditor to a large amount,

and had stopped supplies. Sheridan was to give a grand dinner to the leaders of the Opposition, and had no port or sherry to offer them. On the morning of the day fixed he sent for Chalier, and told him he wanted to settle his account. The importer, much pleased, said he would go home and bring it at once. "Stay," cried the debtor, "will you dine with me to-day? Lord ——, Sir ——, and So-and-so are coming." Chalier was flattered and readily accepted. Returning to his office, he told his clerk that he should dine with Mr. Sheridan, and therefore leave early. At the proper hour he arrived in full dress, and was no sooner in the house than his host despatched a message to the clerk at the office, saying that Mr. Chalier wished him to send up at once three dozen of Burgundy, two of claret, two of port, etc. etc. Nothing seemed more natural, and the wine was forwarded just in time for the dinner. It was highly praised by the guests, who asked Sheridan who was his wine-merchant. The host bowed towards Chalier, gave him a high recommendation, and impressed him with the belief that he was telling a polite falsehood in order to secure him other customers. Little did he think that he was drinking his own wine, and that it was not, and probably never would be, paid for!

In like manner, when he wanted a particular Burgundy from an innkeeper at Richmond, who declined to supply it till his bill was paid, he sent for the man, and had no sooner seen him safe in the house than

he drove off to Richmond, saw his wife, told her he had just had a conversation with mine host, settled everything, and would, to save them trouble, take the wine with him in his carriage. The condescension overpowered the good woman, who ordered it at once to be produced, and Sheridan drove home about the time that her husband was returning to Richmond, weary of waiting for his absent debtor. But this kind of trickery could not always succeed without some knowledge of his creditor's character. In the case of Holloway, the lawyer, Sheridan took advantage of his well-known vanity of his judgment of horse-flesh. Kelly gives the anecdote as authentic. He was walking one day with Sheridan, close to the churchyard of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, when, as ill-luck would have it, up comes Holloway on horseback, and in a furious rage complains that he has called on Mr. Sheridan time and again in Hertford Street, and can never gain admittance. He proceeds to violent threats, and slangs his debtor roundly. Sheridan, cool as a whole bed of cucumbers, takes no notice of these attacks, but quietly exclaims: "What a beautiful creature you're riding, Holloway!" The lawyer's weak point was touched.

"You were speaking to me the other day about a horse for Mrs. Sheridan; now this would be a treasure for a lady."

"Does he canter well?" asks Sheridan, with a look of business.

"Like Pegasus himself."

"If that's the case, I shouldn't mind, Holloway, stretching a point for him. Do you mind showing me his paces?"

"Not at all," replies the lawyer, only too happy to show off his own: and touching up the horse, put him to a quiet canter. The moment is not to be lost; the churchyard gate is at hand; Sheridan slips in, knowing that his mounted tormentor cannot follow him, and there bursts into a roar of laughter, which is joined in by Kelly, but not by the returning Holloway.

But if he escaped an importunate lawyer once in a way like this, he required more ingenuity to get rid of the limbs of the law, when they came, as they did frequently in his later years. It was the fashionable thing in bygone novels of the "Pelham" school, and even in more recent comedies, to introduce a well-dressed sheriff's officer at a dinner party or ball, and take him through a variety of predicaments, ending, at length, in the revelation of his real character; and probably some such scene is still enacted from time to time in the houses of the extravagant: but Sheridan's adventures with bailiffs seem to have excited more attention. In the midst of his difficulties he never ceased to entertain his friends, and "why should he not do so, since he had not to pay?" "Pay your bills, sir? What a shameful waste of money!" he once said. Thus, one day a young friend was met by him

and taken back to dinner, "quite in a quiet way, just to meet a very old friend of mine, a man of great talent and most charming companion." When they arrived they found "the old friend" already installed, and presenting a somewhat unpolished appearance, which the young man explained to himself by supposing him to be a genius of somewhat low extraction. His habits at dinner, the eager look, the free use of his knife, and so forth, were all accounted for in the same way, but that he was a genius of no slight distinction was clear from the deep respect and attention with which Sheridan listened to his slightest remarks, and asked his opinion on English poetry. Meanwhile Sheridan and the servant between them plied the genius very liberally with wine: and the former, rising, made him a complimentary speech on his critical powers, while the young guest, who had heard nothing from his lips but the commonest platitudes in very bad English, grew more and more amused. The wine told in time, the "genius" sang songs which were more Saxon than delicate, talked loud, clapped his host on the shoulder, and at last rolled fairly under the table. "Now," said Sheridan, quite calmly to his young friend, "we will go up stairs: and, Jack" (to his servant), "take that man's hat and give him to the watch." He then explained in the same calm tone, that this was a bailiff of whose company he was growing rather tired, and wanted to be freed.

But his finest tricks were undoubtedly those by

which he turned, harlequin-like, a creditor into a lender. This was done by sheer force of persuasion, by assuming a lofty indignation, or by putting forth his claims to mercy with the most touching eloquence, over which he would laugh heartily when his point was gained. He was often compelled to do this during his theatrical management, when a troublesome creditor might have interfered with the success of the establishment. He talked over an upholsterer who came with a writ for £350 till the latter handed him, instead, a cheque for £200. He once, when the actors struck for arrears of wages to the amount of £3000, and his bankers refused flatly to Kelly to advance another penny, screwed the whole sum out of them in less than a quarter of an hour by sheer talk. He got a gold watch from Harris, the manager, with whom he had broken several appointments, by complaining that as he had no watch he could never tell the time fixed for their meetings: and, as for putting off pressing creditors, and turning furious foes into affectionate friends, he was such an adept at it, that his reputation as a dun destroyer is quite on a par with his fame as comedian and orator.

Hoaxing, a style of amusement fortunately out of fashion now, was almost a passion with him, and his practical jokes were as merciless as his satire. He and Tickell, who had married the sister of his wife, used to play them off on one another like a couple of schoolboys. One evening, for instance, Sheridan got

together all the crockery in the house and arranged it in a dark passage, leaving a small channel for escape for himself, and then, having teased Tickell till he rushed after him, bounded out and picked his way gingerly along the passage. His friend followed him unwittingly, and at the first step stumbled over a wash-hand-basin, and fell forwards with a crash on piles of plates and dishes, which cut his face and hands in a most cruel manner, Sheridan all the while laughing immoderately at the end of the passage, secure from vengeance.

But his most impudent hoax was that on the Honorable House of Commons itself. Lord Belgrave had made a very telling speech which he wound up with a Greek quotation, loudly applauded. Sheridan had no arguments to meet him with; so, rising, he admitted the force of his lordship's quotation (of which he probably did not understand a word), but added that had he gone a little farther, and completed the passage, he would have seen that the context completely altered the sense. He would prove it to the House, he said, and forthwith rolled forth a grand string of majestic gibberish so well imitated that the whole assembly cried, "Hear, hear!" Lord Belgrave rose again, and frankly admitted that the passage had the meaning ascribed to it by the honorable gentleman, and that he had overlooked it at the moment. At the end of the evening, Fox, who prided himself on his classical lore, came up to and said to him, "Sheridan, how

came you to be so ready with that passage? It is certainly as you say, but I was not aware of it before you quoted it." Sheridan was wise enough to keep his own counsel for the time, but must have felt delightfully tickled at the ignorance of the would-be savants with whom he was politically associated. Probably Sheridan could not at any time have quoted a whole passage of Greek on the spur of the moment; but it is certain that he had not kept up his classics, and at the time in question must have forgotten the little he ever knew of them.

This facility of imitating exactly the sound of a language without introducing a single word of it is not so very rare, but is generally possessed in greater readiness by those who know no tongue but their own, and are therefore more struck by the strangeness of a foreign one, when hearing it. Many of us have heard Italian songs in which there was not a word of actual Italian sung in London burlesques, and some of us have laughed at Levassor's capital imitation of English; but perhaps the cleverest mimic of the kind I ever heard was M. Laffitte, brother of that famous banker who made his fortune by picking up a pin. This gentleman could speak nothing but French, but had been brought by his business into contact with foreigners of every race at Paris, and when he once began his little trick, it was impossible to believe that he was not possessed of a gift of tongues. His German and Italian were good enough, but his English

was so splendidly counterfeited, that after listening to him for a short time, I suddenly heard a roar of laughter from all present, for I had actually unconsciously *answered him*, "Yes," "No," "Exactly so," and "I quite agree with you."

Undoubtedly much of Sheridan's depravity must be attributed to his intimacy with a man whom it was a great honor to a youngster then to know, but who would probably be scouted from a London club in the present day—the Prince of Wales. The part of a courtier is always degrading enough to play; but to be courtier to a prince whose favor was to be won by proficiency in vice and audacity in follies, to truckle to his tastes, to win his smile by the invention of a new pleasure and his approbation by the plotting of a new villainy, what an office for the author of "The School for Scandal," and the author renowned for denouncing the wickedness of Warren Hastings! What a life for the young poet who had wooed and won the Maid of Bath—for the man of strong domestic affections, who wept over his father's sternness, and loved his son only too well! It was bad enough for such mere worldlings as Captain Hanger or Beau Brummell, but for a man of higher and purer feelings, like Sheridan, who, with all his faults, had some poetry in his soul, such a career was doubly disgraceful.

It was at the house of the beautiful, lively, and adventurous Duchess of Devonshire, the partisan of Charles James Fox, who loved him or his cause—

for Fox and Liberalism were often one in ladies' eyes—so well, that she could give Steele, the butcher, a kiss for his vote, that Sheridan first met the prince —then a boy in years, but already more than an adult in vice. No doubt the youth whom Fox, Brummell, Hanger, Lord Surrey, Sheridan, the tailors and the women, combined to turn at once into the finest gentleman and greatest blackguard in Europe, was at that time as fascinating in appearance and manner as any one, prince or not, could be. He was by far the handsomest of the Hanoverians, and had the least amount of their sheepish look. He possessed all their taste and capacity for gallantry, with apparently none of the German coarseness which certain other Princes of Wales exhibited in their amorous address. *His* coarseness was of a more sensual, but less imperious kind. He *had* his redeeming points, which few of his ancestors had, and his liberal hand and warm heart won him friends, where his conduct could win him little else than contempt. Sheridan was introduced to him by Fox, and Mrs. Sheridan by the Duchess of Devonshire. The prince had that which always takes with Englishmen—a readiness of conviviality, and a recklessness of character. He was ready to chat, drink, and bet with Sheridan, or any new-comer equally well recommended, and an introduction to young George was always followed by an easy recognition. With all this he managed to keep up a certain amount of royal dignity under the most trying circumstances, but he

had none of that easy grace which made Charles II. beloved by his associates. When the George had gone too far, he had no resource but to cut the individual with whom he had hobbed and nobbed, and was as ungrateful in his enmities as he was ready with his friendship. Brummell had taught him to dress, and Sheridan had given him wiser counsels; he quarrelled with both for trifles, which, if he had had real dignity, would never have occurred, and if he had had real friendship, would easily have been overlooked.

Sheridan's breach with the prince was honorable to him. He could not wholly approve of the conduct of that personage and his ministers, and he told him openly that his life was at his service, but his character was the property of the country. The prince replied that Sheridan "might impeach his ministers on the morrow—that would not impair their friendship;" yet turned on his heel, and was never his friend again. When, again, the "delicate investigation" came off, he sent for Sheridan, and asked his aid. The latter replied, "Your royal highness honors me, but I will never take part against a woman, whether she be right or wrong." His political courage atones somewhat for the want of moral courage he displayed in pandering to the prince's vices.

Many an anecdote is told of Sheridan and "Wales" —many, indeed, that cannot be repeated. Their bets were often of the coarsest nature, won by Sheridan in the coarsest manner. A great intimacy sprang up

between the two reprobates, and Sheridan became one of the satellites of that dissolute prince. There are few of the stories of their adventures which can be told in a work like this, but we may give one or two specimens of the less disgraceful character:—

The Prince, Lord Surrey, and Sheridan were in the habit of seeking nightly adventures of any kind that suggested itself to their lively minds. A low tavern, still in existence, was the rendezvous of the heir to the crown and his noble and distinguished associates. This was the "Salutation," in Tavistock Court, Covent Garden, a night house for gardeners and countrymen, and for sharpers who fleeced both, and was kept by a certain Mother Butler, who favored in every way the adventurous designs of her exalted guests. Here wigs, smock-frocks, and other disguises were in readiness; and here, at call, was to be found a ready-made magistrate, whose sole occupation was to deliver the young Haroun and his companions from the dilemmas which their adventures naturally brought them into, and which were generally more or less concerned with the watch. Poor old watch! what happy days, when members of Parliament, noblemen, and future monarchs condescended to break thy bob-wigged head! and—blush, Z 350, immaculate constable—to toss thee a guinea to buy plaster with.

In addition to the other disguise, *aliases* were of course assumed. The prince went by the name of Blackstock, Greystock was my Lord Surrey, and Thin-

stock Richard Brinsley Sheridan. The treatment of women by the police is traditional. The "unfortunate"—unhappy creatures!—are their pet aversion, and once in their clutches, receive no mercy. The "Charley" of old was quite as brutal as the modern Hercules of the glazed hat, and the three adventurers showed an amount of zeal worthy of a nobler cause, in rescuing the drunken Laïs from his grasp. On one occasion they seem to have hit on a "deserving case;" a slight skirmish with the watch ended in a rescue, and the erring creature was taken off to a house of respectability sufficient to protect her. Here she told her tale, which, however improbable, turned out to be true. It was a very old, a very simple one—the common history of many a frail, foolish girl, cursed with beauty, and the prey of a practised seducer. The main peculiarity lay in the fact of her respectable birth, and his position, she being the daughter of a solicitor, he the son of a nobleman. Marriage was promised, of course, as it has been promised a million times with the same intent, and for the millionth time was not performed. The seducer took her from her home, kept her quiet for a time, and when the novelty was gone, abandoned her. The old story went on; poverty—a child—a mother's love struggling with a sense of shame—a visit to her father's house at the last moment, as a forlorn hope. There she had crawled on her knees to one of those relentless parents on whose heads lie the utter loss of their children's souls. The false pride,

that spoke of the blot on his name, the disgrace of his house—when a Saviour's example should have bid him forgive and raise the penitent in her misery from the dust—whispered him to turn her from his door. He ordered the footman to put her out. The man, a nobleman in plush, moved by his young mistress's utter misery, would not obey, though it cost him his place, and the harder-hearted father himself thrust his starving child into the cold street, into the drizzling rain, and slammed the door upon her cries of agony. The footman slipped out after her, and five shillings—a large sum for him—found its way from his kind hand to hers. Now the common ending might have come; now starvation, the slow, unwilling recourse to more shame and deeper vice; then the forced hilarity, the unreal smile, which in so many of these poor creatures hides a canker at the heart; the gradual degradation—lower still and lower—oblivion for a moment sought in the bottle—a life of sin and death ended in a hospital. The will of Providence turned the frolic of three voluptuaries to good account; the prince gave his purse-full, Sheridan his one last guinea for her present needs; the name of the good-hearted Plush was discovered, and he was taken into Carlton House, where he soon became known as Roberts, the prince's confidential servant; and Sheridan bestirred himself to rescue for ever the poor lady, whose beauty still remained as a temptation. He procured her a situation, where she studied for the stage, on which she eventu-

ally appeared. "All's well that ends well:" her secret was kept, till one admirer came honorably forward. To him it was confided, and he was noble enough to forgive the one false step of youth. She was well married, and the boy for whom she had suffered so much fell at Trafalgar, a lieutenant in the navy.

To better men such an adventure would have been a solemn warning; such a tale, told by the ruined one herself, a sermon, every word of which would have clung to their memories. What effect, if any, it may have had on Blackstock and his companions must have been very fleeting.

It is not so very long since the Seven Dials and St. Giles' were haunts of wickedness and dens of thieves, into which the police scarcely dared to penetrate. Probably their mysteries would have afforded more amusement to the artist and the student of character than to the mere seeker of adventure, but it was still, I remember, in my early days, a great feat to visit by night one of the noted "cribs" to which "the profession" which fills Newgate was wont to resort. The "Brown Bear," in Broad Street, St. Giles', was one of these pleasant haunts, and thither the three adventurers determined to go. This style of adventure is out of date, and no longer amusing. Of course a fight ensued, in which the prince and his companions showed immense pluck against terrible odds, and in which, as one reads in the novels of the "London Journal" or

"Family Herald," the natural superiority of the well-born of course displayed itself to great advantage. Surely Bulwer has described such scenes too graphically in some of his earlier novels to make a minute description here at all necessary; but the reader who is curious in the matter may be referred to a work which has recently appeared under the title of "Sheridan and his Times," professing to be written by an Octogenarian, intimate with the hero. The fray ended with the arrival of the watch, who rescued Blackstock, Greystock, and Thinstock, and with Dogberryan stupidity carried them off to a neighboring lock-up. The examination which took place was just the occasion for Sheridan's fun to display itself on, and pretending to turn informer, he succeeded in bewildering the unfortunate parochial constable, who conducted it, till the arrival of the magistrate whose duty was to deliver his friends from durance vile. The whole scene is well described in the book just referred to, with, we presume, a certain amount of idealizing; but the "Octogenarian" had probably heard the story from Sheridan himself, and the main points must be accepted as correct. The affair ended, as usual, with a supper at the "Salutation."

We must now follow Sheridan in his gradual downfall.

One of the causes of this—as far as money was concerned—was his extreme indolence and utter negligence. He trusted far too much to his ready wit and

rapid genius. Thus when "Pizarro" was to appear, day after day went by, and nothing was done. On the night of representation, only four acts out of five were written, and even these had not been rehearsed, the principal performers, Siddons, Charles Kemble, and Barrymore, having only just received their parts. Sheridan was up in the prompter's room actually writing the fifth act while the first was being performed, and every now and then appeared in the green-room with a fresh relay of dialogue, and setting all in good humor by his merry abuse of his own negligence. In spite of this, "Pizarro" succeeded. He seldom wrote except at night, and surrounded by a profusion of lights. Wine was his great stimulant in composition, as it has been to better and worse authors. "If the thought is slow to come," he would say, "a glass of good wine encourages it; and when it does come, a glass of good wine rewards it." Those glasses of good wine were, unfortunately, even more frequent than the good thoughts, many and merry as they were.

His neglect of letters was a standing joke against him. He never took the trouble to open any that he did not expect, and often left sealed many that he was most anxious to read. He once appeared with his begging face at the Bank, humbly asking an advance of twenty pounds. "Certainly, sir; would you like any more?—fifty or a hundred?" said the smiling clerk. Sheridan was overpowered. He *would* like a hundred. "Two or three?" asked the scribe. Sheridan thought

he was joking, but was ready for two or even three—he was always ready for more. But he could not conceal his surprise. "Have you not received our letter?" the clerk asked, perceiving it. Certainly he had received the epistle, which informed him that his salary as Receiver-General of Cornwall had been paid in, but he had never opened it.

This neglect of letters once brought him into a troublesome lawsuit about the theatre. It was necessary to pay certain demands, and he had applied to the Duke of Bedford to be his security. The duke had consented, and for a whole year his letter of consent remained unopened. In the mean time Sheridan had believed that the duke had neglected him, and allowed the demands to be brought into court.

In the same way he had long before committed himself in the affair with Captain Matthews. In order to give a public denial of certain reports circulated in Bath, he had called upon an editor, requesting him to insert the said reports in his paper in order that he might write him a letter to refute them. The editor at once complied, the calumny was printed and published, but Sheridan forgot all about his own refutation, which was applied for in vain till too late.

Other causes were his extravagance and intemperance. There was an utter want of even common moderation in everything he did. Whenever his boyish spirit suggested any freak, whenever a craving of any kind possessed him, no matter what the consequences

here or hereafter, he rushed heedlessly into the indulgence of it. Perhaps the enemy had never an easier subject to deal with. Any sin in which there was a show of present mirth, or easy pleasure, was as easily taken up by Sheridan as if he had not a single particle of conscience or religious feeling, and yet we are not at all prepared to say that he lacked either; he had only deadened both by excessive indulgence of his fancies. The temptation of wealth and fame had been too much for the poor and obscure young man who rose to them so suddenly, and, as so often happens, those very talents which should have been his glory were, in fact, his ruin.

His extravagance was unbounded. At a time when misfortune lay thick upon him, and bailiffs were hourly expected, he would invite a large party to a dinner, which a prince might have given, and to which one prince sometimes sat down. On one occasion, having no plate left from the pawnbroker's, he had to prevail on "my uncle" to lend him some for a banquet he was to give. The spoons and forks were sent, and with them two of his men, who, dressed in livery, waited, no doubt with the most vigilant attention, on the party. Such at that period was the host's reputation, when he could not even be trusted not to pledge another man's property. At one time his income was reckoned at £15,000 a year, when the theatre was prosperous. Of this he is said to have spent not more than £5000 on his household, while the balance

went to pay for his former follies, debts, and the interest, lawsuits often arising from mere carelessness and judgments against the theatre! Probably a great deal of it was betted away, drank away, thrown away in one way or another. As for betting, he generally lost all the wagers he made: as he said himself, "I never made a bet upon my own judgment that I did not lose; and I never won but one, which I had made against my judgment." His bets were generally laid in hundreds; and though he did not gamble, he could of course run through a good deal of money in this way. He betted on every possible trifle, but chiefly, it would seem, on political possibilities—the state of the Funds, the result of an election, or the downfall of a ministry. Horse-races do not seem to have possessed any interest for him, and, in fact, he scarcely knew one kind of horse from another. He was never an adept at field-sports, though very ambitious of being thought a sportsman. Once, when staying in the country, he went out with a friend's gamekeeper to shoot pheasants, and after wasting a vast amount of powder and shot upon the air, he was only rescued from ignominy by the sagacity of his companion, who, going a little behind him when a bird rose, brought it down so neatly that Sheridan, believing he had killed it himself, snatched it up, and rushed bellowing with glee back to the house to show that he *could* shoot. In the same way, he tried his hand at fishing in a wretched little stream behind the Deanery at Win-

chester, using, however, a net, as easier to handle than a rod. Some boys, who had watched his want of success a long time, at last bought a few pennyworth of pickled herrings, and throwing them on the stream, allowed them to float down towards the eager disciple of old Izaak. Sheridan saw them coming, rushed in regardless of his clothes, cast his net, and in great triumph secured them. When he had landed his prize, however, there were the boys bursting with laughter, and Piscator saw he was their dupe. "Ah!" cried he, laughing in concert, as he looked at his dripping clothes, "this is a pretty *pickle* indeed!"

His extravagance was well known to his friends, as well as to his creditors. Lord Guilford met him one day. "Well, so you've taken a new house, I hear."—"Yes, and you'll see now that everything will go on like clockwork."—"Ay," said my lord, with a knowing leer, "*tick, tick.*" Even his son Tom used to laugh at him for it. "Tom, if you marry that girl, I'll cut you off with a shilling."—"Then you must borrow it," replied the ingenuous youth.[1] Tom sometimes disconcerted his father with his inherited wit—his only inheritance. He pressed urgently for money on one as on many an occasion. "I have none," was the reply, as usual; "there is a pair of pistols up stairs, a horse in the stable, the night is dark, and Hounslow Heath at hand."

[1] Another version is that Tom replied: "You don't happen to have it about you, sir, do you?"

"I understand what you mean," replied young Tom; "but I tried that last night, and unluckily stopped your treasurer, Peake, who told me you had been beforehand with him, and robbed him of every sixpence he had in the world."

So much for the respect of son to father.

Papa had his revenge on the young wit when Tom, talking of Parliament, announced his intention of entering it on an independent basis, ready to be bought by the highest bidder. "I shall write on my forehead," said he, "'To let.'"

"And under that, Tom, 'Unfurnished,'" rejoined Sherry the elder. The joke is now stale enough.

But Sheridan was more truly witty in putting down a young braggart whom he met at dinner at a country-house. There are still to be found, like the bones of dead asses in a field newly ploughed, in some parts of the country, youths who are so hopelessly behind their age, and indeed every age, as to look upon authorship as degrading, all knowledge, save Latin and Greek, as "a bore," and all entertainment but hunting, shooting, fishing, and badger-drawing, as unworthy of a man. In the last century these young animals, who unite the modesty of the puppy with the clear-sightedness of the pig, not to mention the progressiveness of another quadruped, were more numerous than in the present day, and in consequence more forward in their remarks. It was one of these charming youths, who was staying in the same house as Sheridan, and who,

quite unprovoked, began at dinner to talk of "actors and authors, and those low sort of people, you know." Sheridan said naught, but patiently bided his time. The next day there was a large dinner-party, and Sheridan and the youth happened to sit opposite to one another in the most conspicuous part of the table. Young Nimrod was kindly obliging his side of the table with extraordinary leaps of his hunter, the perfect working of his new double-barrelled Manton, etc., bringing of course number one in as the hero in each case. In a moment of silence, Sheridan, with an air of great politeness, addressed his unhappy victim. "He had not," he said, "been able to catch the whole of the very interesting account he had heard Mr. —— relating." All eyes were turned upon the two. "Would Mr. —— permit him to ask who it was who made the extraordinary leap he had mentioned?"—"I, sir," replied the youth with some pride. —"Then who was it killed the wild duck at that distance?"—"I, sir."—"Was it your setter who behaved so well?"—"Yes, mine, sir," replied the youth, getting rather red over this examination.—"And who caught the huge salmon so neatly?"—"I, sir." And so the questioning went on through a dozen more items, till the young man, weary of answering "I, sir," and growing redder and redder every moment, would gladly have hid his head under the table-cloth, in spite of his sporting prowess. But Sheridan had to give him the *coup de grâce*.

"So, sir," said he, very politely, "you were the chief *actor* in every anecdote, and the *author* of them all; surely it is impolitic to despise your own professions."

Sheridan's intemperance was as great and as incurable as his extravagance, and we think his mind, if not his body, lived only on stimulants. He could neither write nor speak without them. One day, before one of his finest speeches in the House, he was seen to enter a coffee-house, call for a pint of brandy, and swallow it "neat," and almost at one gulp. His friends occasionally interfered. This drinking, they told him, would destroy the coat of his stomach. "Then my stomach must digest in its waistcoat," laughed Sheridan.

Where are the topers of yore? Jovial I will not call them, for every one knows that

"Mirth and laughter,"

worked up with a corkscrew, are followed by

"Headaches and hot coppers the day after."

But where are those Anakim of the bottle, who *could* floor their two of port and one of Madeira, though the said two and one floored them in turn? The race, I believe, has died out. Our heads have got weaker, as our cellars grew emptier. The arrangement was convenient. The daughters of Eve have nobly undertaken to atone for the naughty conduct of their prim-

eval mamma, by reclaiming men, and dragging them from the Hades of the mahogany to that seventh heaven of muffins and English ballads prepared for them in the drawing-room.

We are certainly astounded, even to incredulity, when we read of the deeds of a David or a Samson; but such wonderment can be nothing compared to that which a generation or two hence will feel, when sipping, as a great extravagance and unpardonable luxury, two thimblefuls of "African Sherry," the young demirep of the day reads that three English gentlemen, Sheridan, Richardson, and Ward, sat down one day to dinner, and before they rose again—if they ever rose, which seems doubtful—or, at least, were raised, had emptied five bottles of port, two of Madeira, and one of brandy! Yet this was but one instance in a thousand; there was nothing extraordinary in it, and it is only mentioned because the amount drunk is accurately given by the unhappy owner of the wine, Kelly, the composer, who, unfortunately, or fortunately, was not present, and did not even imagine that the three honorable gentlemen were discussing his little store. Yet Sheridan does not seem to have believed much in his friend's vintages, for he advised him to alter his brass plate to "Michael Kelly, Composer of Wine and Importer of Music." He made a better joke, when, dining with Lord Thurlow, he tried in vain to induce him to produce a second bottle of some extremely choice Constantia from the Cape of Good Hope. "Ah," he

muttered to his neighbor, "pass me that decanter, if you please, for I must return to Madeira, as I see I cannot *double the Cape*."

But as long as Richard Brinsley was a leader of political and fashionable circles, as long as he had a position to keep up, an ambition to satisfy, a labor to complete, his drinking was, if not moderate, not extraordinary for his time and his associates. But when a man's ambition is limited to mere success—when fame and a flash for himself are all he cares for, and there is no truer, grander motive for his sustaining the position he has climbed to—when, in short, it is his own glory, not mankind's good, he has ever striven for—woe, woe, woe when the hour of success is come! I cannot stop to name and examine instances, but let me be allowed to refer to that bugbear who is called up whenever greatness of any kind has to be illustrated—Napoleon the Great; or let me take any of the lesser Napoleons in lesser grades in any nation, any age—the men who have had no star but self and self-glory before them—and let me ask if any one can be named who, if he has survived the attainment of his ambition, has not gone down the other side of the hill somewhat faster than he came up it? Then let me select men whose guiding-star has been the good of their fellow-creatures or the glory of God, and watch their peaceful useful end on that calm summit that they toiled so honestly to reach. The difference comes home to us. The moral is read only at the end of the story. Remorse rings it for

ever in the ears of the dying—often too long a-dying —man who has labored for himself. Peace reads it smilingly to him whose generous toil for others has brought its own reward.

Sheridan had climbed with the stride of a giant, laughing at rocks, at precipices, at slippery water-courses. He had spread the wings of genius to poise himself withal, and gained one peak after another, while homelier worth was struggling midway, clutching the bramble and clinging to the ferns. He had, as Byron said in Sheridan's days of decay, done the best in all he undertook, written the best comedy, best opera, best farce; spoken the best parody, and made the best speech. Sheridan, when those words of the young poet were told him, shed tears. Perhaps the bitter thought struck him, that he had *not* led the best, but the *worst* life; that comedy, farce, opera, monody, and oration were nothing, nothing to a pure conscience and a peaceful old age; that they could not save him from shame and poverty—from debt, disgrace, drunkenness—from grasping, but long-cheated creditors, who dragged his bed from under the feeble, nervous, ruined old man. Poor Sheridan! his end was too bitter for us to cast one stone more upon him. Let it be noted that it was in the beginning of his decline, when, having reached the climax of all his ambition and completed his fame as a dramatist, orator, and wit, that the hand of Providence mercifully interposed to rescue this reckless man from his downfall. It smote him

with that common but powerful weapon—death. Those he best loved were torn from him, one after another, rapidly, and with little warning. The Linleys, the "nest of nightingales," were all delicate, as nightingales should be; and it seemed as if this very time was chosen for their deaths, that the one erring soul—more precious, remember, than many just lives—might be called back. Almost within one year he lost his dear sister-in-law, the wife of his most intimate friend Tickell; Maria Linley, the last of the family; his own wife, and his little daughter. One grief succeeded another so rapidly that Sheridan was utterly unnerved, utterly brought low by them; but it was his wife's death that told most upon him. With that wife he had always been the lover rather than the husband. She had married him in the days of his poverty, when her beauty was so celebrated that she might have wed whom she would. She had risen with him and shared his later anxieties. Yet she had seen him forget, neglect her, and seek other society. In spite of his tender affection for her and for his children, he had never made a *home* of their home. Vanity Fair had kept him ever flitting, and it is little to be wondered at that Mrs. Sheridan was the object of much, though ever respectful, admiration.[1] Yet, in spite of calumny, she died with a fair fame. Decline had long pressed upon her, yet her last illness was too brief. In 1792 she was

[1] Lord Edward Fitzgerald was one of the most devoted of her admirers; he chose his wife, Pamela, because she resembled Mrs. Sheridan.—See Moore's Life of Lord Edward.

taken away, still in the summer of her days, and with her last breath uttering her love for the man who had never duly prized her. His grief was terrible; yet it passed, and wrought no change. He found solace in his beloved son, and yet more beloved daughter. A few months, and the little girl followed her mother. Again his grief was terrible: again passed and wrought no change. Yes, it did work some change, but not for the better; it drove him to the goblet; and from that time we may date the confirmation of his habit of drinking. The solemn warnings had been unheeded: they were to be repeated by a long-suffering God in a yet more solemn manner, which should touch him yet more nearly. His beautiful wife had been the one restraint upon his folly and his lavishness. Now she was gone, they burst out afresh, wilder than ever.

For a while after these afflictions, which were soon completed in the death of his most intimate friend and boyish companion, Tickell, Sheridan threw himself again into the commotion of the political world. But in this we shall not follow him. Three years after the death of his first wife he married again. He was again fortunate in his choice. Though now forty-four, he succeeded in winning the heart of a most estimable and charming young lady with a fortune of £5000. She must indeed have loved or admired the widower very much to consent to be the wife of a man so notoriously irregular, to use a mild term, in his life. But Sheridan fascinated wherever he went, and young ladies

like "a little wildness." His heart was always good, and where he gave it, he gave it warmly, richly, fully. His second wife was Miss Esther Jane Ogle, daughter of the Dean of Winchester. She was given to him on condition of his settling in all £20,000 upon her—a wise proviso with such a spendthrift—and he had to raise the money, as usual.

His political career was sufficiently brilliant, though his real fame as a speaker rests on his great oration at Hastings' trial. In 1806 he satisfied another point of his ambition, long desired, and was elected for the city of Westminster, which he had ardently coveted when Fox represented it. But a dissolution threw him again on the mercy of the popular party; and again he offered himself for Westminster: but, in spite of all the efforts made for him, without success. He was returned, instead, for Ilchester.

Meanwhile his difficulties increased; extravagance, debt, want of energy to meet both, brought him speedily into that position when a man accepts without hesitation the slightest offer of aid. The man who had had an income of £15,000 a year, and settled £20,000 on his wife, allowed a poor friend to pay a bill of £5 for him, and clutched eagerly a £50 note when displayed to him by another. Extravagance is the father of meanness, and Sheridan was often mean in the readiness with which he accepted offers, and the anxiety with which he implored assistance. It is amusing in the present day to hear a man talk of

"a debt of honor," as if all debts did not demand honor to pay them—as if all debts incurred without hope of repayment were not dishonorable. A story is told relative to the old-fashioned idea of "a debt of honor." A tradesman, to whom he had given a bill for £200, called on him for the amount. A heap of gold was lying on the table. "Don't look that way," cried Sheridan, after protesting that he had not a penny in the world, "that is to pay a debt of honor." The applicant, with some wit, tore up the bill he held. "Now, Mr. Sheridan," quoth he, "mine is a debt of honor too." It is to be hoped that Sheridan handed him the money.

The story of Gunter's bill is not so much to his credit. Hanson, an ironmonger, called upon him and pressed for payment. A bill sent in by the famous confectioner was lying on the table. A thought struck the debtor, who had no means of getting rid of his importunate applicant. "You know Gunter?" he asked. "One of the safest men in London," replied the ironmonger. "Then will you be satisfied if I give you his *bill* for the amount?"—"Certainly." Thereupon Sheridan handed him the neatly-folded account and rushed from the room, leaving the creditor to discover the point of Mr. Sheridan's little fun.

Still Sheridan might have weathered through the storm. Drury Lane was a mine of wealth to him, and with a little care might have been really profitable. The lawsuits, the debts, the engagements upon

it, all rose from his negligence and extravagance. But Old Drury was doomed. On the 24th February, 1809, soon after the conclusion of the performances, it was announced to be in flames. Rather it announced itself. In a few moments it was blazing—a royal bonfire. Sheridan was in the House of Commons at the time. The reddening clouds above London threw the glare back even to the windows of the House. The members rushed from their seats to see the unwonted light, and in consideration for Sheridan, an adjournment was moved. But he rose calmly, though sadly, and begged that no misfortune of his should interrupt the public business. His independence, he said—witty in the midst of his troubles—had often been questioned, but was now confirmed, for he had nothing more to depend upon. He then left the House and repaired to the scene of conflagration.

Not long after, Kelly found him sitting quite composed in "The Bedford," sipping his wine, as if nothing had happened. The musician expressed his astonishment at Mr. Sheridan's *sang froid*. "Surely," replied the wit, "you'll admit that a man has a right to take his wine by his own fireside." But Sheridan was only drowning care, not disregarding it. The event was really too much for him, though perhaps he did not realize the extent of its effect at the time. In a word, all he had in the world went with the theatre. Nothing was left either for him or the principal shareholders. Yet he bore it all with fortitude, till he heard

that the harpsichord, on which his first wife was wont to play, was gone too. Then he burst into tears.

This fire was the opening of the shaft down which the great man sank rapidly. While his fortunes kept up, his spirits were not completely exhausted. He drank much, but as an indulgence rather than as a relief. Now it was by wine alone that he could even raise himself to the common requirements of conversation. He is described, *before* dinner, as depressed, nervous, and dull; *after* dinner only did the old fire break out, the old wit blaze up, and Dick Sheridan was Dick Sheridan once more. He was, in fact, fearfully oppressed by the long-accumulated and never-to-be-wiped-off debts, for which he was now daily pressed. In quitting Parliament he resigned his sanctuary, and left himself an easy prey to the Jews and Gentiles, whom he had so long dogged and deluded with his ready ingenuity. Drury Lane, as we all know, was rebuilt, and the birth of the new house heralded with a prologue by Byron, about as good as the one in "Rejected Addresses," the cleverest parodies ever written, and suggested by this very occasion. The building-committee having advertised for a prize prologue, Samuel Whitbread sent in his own attempt, in which, as probably in a hundred others, the new theatre was compared to a Phœnix rising out of the ashes of the old one. Sheridan said Whitbread's description of a Phœnix was excellent, for it was quite a *poulterer's description*.

This same Sam Whitbread was now to figure conspicuously in the life of Mr. Richard B. Sheridan. The ex-proprietor was found to have an interest in the theatre to the amount of £150,000—not a trifle to be despised; but he was now past sixty, and it need excite no astonishment that, even with all his liabilities, he was unwilling to begin again the cares of management, or mismanagement, which he had endured so many years. He sold his interest, in which his son Tom was joined, for £60,000. This sum would have cleared off his debts and left him a balance sufficient to secure comfort for his old age. But it was out of the question that any money matters should go right with Dick Sheridan. Of the rights and wrongs of the quarrel between him and Whitbread, who was the chairman of the committee for building the new theatre, I do not pretend to form an opinion. Sheridan was not naturally mean, though he descended to meanness when hard pressed—what man of his stamp does not? Whitbread was truly friendly to him for a time. Sheridan was always complaining that he was sued for debts he did not owe, and kept out of many that were due to him. Whitbread knew his man well, and if he withheld what was owing to him, may be excused on the ground of real friendship. All I know is, that Sheridan and Whitbread quarrelled; that the former did not, or affirmed that he did not, receive the full amount of his claim on the property, and that, when what he had received was paid over to his principal creditors,

there was little or nothing left for my lord to spend in banquets to parliamentary friends and jorums of brandy in small coffee-houses.

Because a man is a genius, he is not of necessity an upright, honest, ill-used, oppressed, and cruelly-entreated man. Genius plays the fool wittingly, and often enough quite knowingly, with its own interests. It is its privilege to do so, and no one has a right to complain. But then Genius ought to hold its tongue, and not make itself out a martyr when it has had the dubious glory of defying common-sense. If Genius despises gold, well and good, but when he has spurned it, he should not whine out that he is wrongfully kept from it. Poor Sheridan may or may not have been right in the Whitbread quarrel; he has had his defenders, and I am not ambitious of being numbered among them; but whatever were now his troubles were brought on by his own disregard of all that was right and beautiful in conduct. If he went down to the grave a pauper and a debtor, he had made his own bed, and in it he was to lie.

Lie he did, wretchedly, on the most unhappy bed that old age ever lay on. There is little more of importance to chronicle of his latter days. The retribution came on slowly but terribly. The career of a ruined man is not a pleasant topic to dwell upon, and I leave Sheridan's misery for J. B. Gough to whine and roar over when he wants a shocking example. Sheridan might have earned many a crown in that

capacity, if temperance oratory had been the passion of the day. Debt, disease, depravity—these words describe enough the downward career of his old age. To eat, still more to drink, was now the troublesome enigma of the quondam genius. I say quondam, for all the marks of that genius were now gone. One after another his choicest properties made their way to "my uncle's." The books went first, as if they could be most easily dispensed with; the remnants of his plate followed; then his pictures were sold; and at last even the portrait of his first wife, by Reynolds, was left in pledge for a "further remittance."

The last humiliation arrived in time, and the associate of a prince, the eloquent organ of a party, the man who had enjoyed £15,000 a year, was carried off to a low sponging-house. His pride forsook him in that dismal and disgusting imprisonment, and he wrote to Whitbread a letter which his defenders ought not to have published. He had his friends—staunch ones too—and they aided him. Peter Moore, ironmonger, and even Canning, lent him money and released him from time to time. For six years after the burning of the old theatre, he continued to go down and down. Disease now attacked him fiercely. In the spring of 1816 he was fast waning towards extinction. His day was past; he had outlived his fame as a wit and social light; he was forgotten by many, if not by most, of his old associates. He wrote to Rogers, "I am absolutely undone and broken-hearted." Poor Sheridan!

in spite of all thy faults, who is he whose morality is so stern that he cannot shed one tear over thy latter days? God forgive us, we are all sinners; and if we weep not for this man's deficiency, how shall we ask tears when our day comes? Even as I write, I feel my hand tremble and my eyes moisten over the sad end of one whom I love, though he died before I was born. "They are going to put the carpets out of window," he wrote to Rogers, "and break into Mrs. S.'s room and *take me*. For God's sake let me see you!" See him!—see one friend who could and would help him in his misery! Oh! happy may that man count himself who has never wanted that one friend, and felt the utter helplessness of that want! Poor Sheridan! had he ever asked, or hoped, or looked for that Friend out of *this* world it had been better; for "the Lord thy God is a jealous God," and we go on seeking human friendship and neglecting the divine till it is too late. He found one hearty friend in his physician, Dr. Bain, when all others had forsaken him. The spirit of White's and Brookes', the companion of a prince and a score of noblemen, the enlivener of every "fashionable" table, was forgotten by all but this one doctor. Let us read Moore's description: "A sheriff's officer at length arrested the dying man *in his bed*, and was about to carry him off, in his blankets, to a sponging-house, when Dr. Bain interfered." Who would live the life of revelry that Sheridan lived to have such an end? A few days after, on the 7th of July,

1816, in his sixty-fifth year, he died. Of his last hours the late Professor Smythe wrote an admirable and most touching account, a copy of which was circulated in manuscript. The Professor, hearing of Sheridan's condition, asked to see him, with a view, not only of alleviating present distress, but of calling the dying man to repentance. From his hands the unhappy Sheridan received the Holy Communion; his face, during that solemn rite,—doubly solemn, when it is performed in the chamber of death,—"expressed," Smythe relates, "*the deepest awe.*" That phrase conveys to the mind impressions not easy to be defined, not soon to be forgotten.

Peace! there was not peace even in death, and the creditor pursued him even into the "waste wide,"—even to the coffin. He was lying in state, when a gentleman in the deepest mourning called, it is said, at the house, and introducing himself as an old and much-attached friend of the deceased, begged to be allowed to look upon his face. The tears which rose in his eyes, the tremulousness of his quiet voice, the pallor of his mournful face, deceived the unsuspecting servant, who accompanied him to the chamber of death, removed the lid of the coffin, turned down the shroud, and revealed features which had once been handsome, but long since rendered almost hideous by drinking. The stranger gazed with profound emotion, while he quietly drew from his pocket a bailiff's wand, and touching the corpse's face with it, suddenly altered his

manner to one of considerable glee, and informed the servant that he had arrested the corpse in the king's name for a debt of £500. It was the morning of the funeral, which was to be attended by half the grandees of England, and in a few minutes the mourners began to arrive. But the corpse was the bailiff's property, till his claim was paid, and naught but the money would soften the iron capturer. Canning and Lord Sidmouth agreed to settle the matter, and over the coffin the debt was paid.

Poor corpse! was it worth £500—diseased, rotting as it was, and about to be given for nothing to mother earth? Was it worth the pomp of the splendid funeral and the grand hypocrisy of grief with which it was borne to Westminster Abbey? Was not rather the wretched old man, while he yet struggled on in life, worth this outlay, worth this show of sympathy? Folly; not folly only—but a lie! What recked the dead of the four noble pall-bearers—the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Lauderdale, Earl Mulgrave, and the Bishop of London? What good was it to him to be followed by two royal highnesses—the Dukes of York and Sussex—by two marquises, seven earls, three viscounts, five lords, a Canning, a lord mayor, and a whole regiment of honorables and right honorables, who now wore the livery of grief when they had let him die in debt, in want, and in misery? Far more, if the dead could feel, must he have been grateful for the honester tears of those two untitled men who had

really befriended him to the last hour and never abandoned him, Mr. Rogers and Dr. Bain. But peace; let him pass with nodding plumes and well-dyed horses to the great Walhalla, and amid the dust of many a poet let the poet's dust find rest and honor, secure at last from the hand of the bailiff. There was but one nook unoccupied in Poet's Corner, and there they laid him. A simple marble was afforded by another friend without a title—Peter Moore.

To a life like Sheridan's it is almost impossible to do justice in so narrow a space as I have here. He is one of those men who, not to be made out a whit better or worse than they are, demand a careful investigation of all their actions, or reported actions—a careful sifting of all the evidence for or against them, and a careful weeding of all the anecdotes told of them. This requires a separate biography. To give a general idea of the man, we must be content to give that which he inspired in a general acquaintance. Many of his "mots," and more of the stories about him, may have been invented for him, but they would scarcely have been fixed on Sheridan, if they had not fitted more or less his character: I have therefore given them. I might have given a hundred more, but I have let alone those anecdotes which do not seem to illustrate the character of the man. Many another good story is told of him, and we must content ourselves with one or two. Take one that is characteristic of his love of fun.

Sheridan is accosted by an elderly gentleman, who

has forgotten the name of a street to which he wants to go, and who informs him precisely that it is an out-of-the-way name.

"Perhaps, sir, you mean John Street?" says Sherry, all innocence.

"No, an unusual name."

"It can't be Charles Street?"

Impatience on the part of the old gentleman.

"King Street?" suggests the cruel wit.

"I tell you, sir, it is a street with a very odd name!"

"Bless me, is it Queen Street?"

Irritation on the part of the old gentleman.

"It must be Oxford Street?" cried Sheridan as if inspired.

"Sir, I repeat," very testily, "that it is a very odd name. Every one knows Oxford Street!"

Sheridan appears to be thinking.

"An odd name! Oh! ah! just so; Piccadilly, of course?"

Old gentleman bounces away in disgust.

"Well, sir," Sheridan calls after him, "I envy you your admirable memory!"

His wit was said to have been prepared, like his speeches, and he is even reported to have carried his book of *mots* in his pocket, as a young lady of the middle class *might*, but seldom does, carry her book of etiquette into a party. But some of his wit was no doubt extempore.

When arrested for non-attendance to a call in the House, soon after the change of ministry, he exclaimed, "How hard to be no sooner out of office than into custody!"

He was not an inveterate talker, like Macaulay, Sydney Smith, or Jeffrey: he seems rather to have aimed at a striking effect in all that he said. When found tripping he had a clever knack of getting out of the difficulty. In the Hastings speech he complimented Gibbon as a "luminous" writer; questioned on this, he replied archly, "I said *vo*-luminous."

I cannot afford to be voluminous on Sheridan, and so I quit him.

BEAU BRUMMELL.

It is astonishing to what a number of insignificant things high art has been applied, and with what success. It is the vice of high civilization to look for it and reverence it, where a ruder age would only laugh at its employment. Crime and cookery, especially, have been raised into sciences of late, and the professors of both received the amount of honor due to their acquirements. Who would be so naïve as to sneer at the author of "The Art of Dining"? or who so ungentlemanly as not to pity the sorrows of a pious baronet, whose devotion to the noble art of appropriation was shamefully rewarded with accommodation gratis on board one of her Majesty's transport-ships? The disciples of Ude have left us the literary results of their studies, and one at least, the graceful Alexis Soyer, is numbered among our public benefactors. We have little doubt that as the art, vulgarly called "embezzlement," becomes more and more fashionable, as it does every day, we shall have a work on the "Art of Appropriation." It is a pity that Brummell looked down upon literature: poor literature! it had a hard struggle to recover the slight, for we are convinced there is not a work more wanted than the "Art of

George (Beau) Brummell.

BRITISH ARMSTRONG GROG

Dressing," and "George the Less" was almost the last professor of that elaborate science.

If the maxim, that "whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well," hold good, Beau Brummell must be regarded in the light of a great man. That dressing is worth doing at all, everybody but a Fiji Islander seems to admit, for everybody does it. If, then, a man succeeds in dressing better than anybody else, it follows that he is entitled to the most universal admiration.

But there was another object to which this great man condescended to apply the principles of high art —I mean affectation. How admirably he succeeded in this his life will show. But can we doubt that he is entitled to our greatest esteem and heartiest gratitude for the studies he pursued with unremitting patience in these two useful branches, when we find that a prince of the blood delighted to honor, and the richest, noblest, and most distinguished men of half a century ago were proud to know him? We are writing, then, of no common man, no mere beau, but of the greatest professor of two of the most popular sciences—Dress and Affectation. Let us speak with reverence of this wonderful genius.

George Brummell was "a self-made man." That is, all that nature, the tailors, stags, and padding had not made of him, he made for himself—his name, his fame, his fortune, and his friends—and all these were great. The author of "Self-help" has most unaccountably

omitted all mention of him, and most erroneously, for if there ever was a man who helped himself, and no one else, it was, "very sincerely yours, George Brummell."

The founder of the noble house of Brummell, the grandfather of our hero, was either a treasury porter, or a confectioner, or something else.[1] At any rate, he let lodgings in Bury Street, and whether from the fact that his wife did not purloin her lodgers' tea and sugar, or from some other cause, he managed to ingratiate himself with one of them—who afterwards became Lord Liverpool—so thoroughly, that through his influence he obtained for his son the post of Private Secretary to Lord North. Nothing could have been more fortunate, except, perhaps, the son's next move, which was to take in marriage the daughter of Richardson, the owner of a well-known lottery-office. Between the lottery of office and the lottery of love, Brummell *père* managed to make a very good fortune. At his death he left as much as £65,000 to be divided among his three children—Raikes says as much as £30,000 apiece—so that the Beau, if not a fool, ought never to have been a pauper.

George Bryan Brummell, the second son of this worthy man, honored by his birth the 7th of June, 1778. No anecdotes of his childhood are preserved, except that he once cried because he could not eat any

[1] Mr. Jesse says that the Beau's grandfather was a servant of Mr. Charles Monson, brother to the first Lord Monson.

more damson tart. In later years he would probably have thought damson tart "very vulgar." He first turns up at Eton at the age of twelve, and even there commences his distinguished career, and is known as "Buck Brummell." The boy showed himself decidedly father to the man here. Master George was not vulgar enough, nor so imprudent, it may be added, as to fight, row, or play cricket, but he distinguished himself by the introduction of a gold buckle in the white stock, by never being flogged, and by his ability in toasting cheese. We do not hear much of his classical attainments.

The very gentlemanly youth was in due time passed on to Oriel College, Oxford. Here he distinguished himself by a studied indifference to college discipline and an equal dislike to studies. He condescended to try for the Newdigate Prize poem, but his genius leaned far more to the turn of a coat-collar than that of a verse, and, unhappily for the British poets, their ranks were not to be dignified by the addition of this illustrious man. The Newdigate was given to another; and so, to punish Oxford, the competitor left it and poetry together, after having adorned the old quadrangle of Oriel for less than a year.

He was now a boy of seventeen, and a very fine boy, too. To judge from a portrait taken in later life, he was not strictly handsome; but he is described as tall, well built, and of a slight and graceful figure. Added to this, he had got from Eton and Oxford, if

not much learning, many a well-born friend, and he was toady enough to cultivate those of better, and to dismiss those of less distinction. He was, through life, a celebrated "cutter," and Brummell's cut was as much admired—by all but the *cuttee*—as Brummell's coat. Then he had some £25,000 as capital, and how could he best invest it? He consulted no stockbroker on this weighty point; he did not even buy a shilling book of advice, such as we have seen advertised for those who do not know what to do with their money. The question was answered in a moment by the young worldling of sixteen: he would enter a crack regiment and invest his guineas in the thousand per cents. of fashionable life.

His namesake, the Regent, was now thirty-two, and had spent those years of his life in acquiring the honorary title of the "first gentleman of Europe" by every act of folly, debauch, dissipation, and degradation which a prince can conveniently perpetrate. He was the hero of London Society, which adored and backbit him alternately, and he was precisely the man whom the boy Brummell would worship. The Regent was colonel of a famous regiment of fops—the Tenth Hussars. It was the most expensive, the most impertinent, the best-dressed, the worst-moralled regiment in the British army. Its officers, many of them titled, all more or less distinguished in the trying campaigns of London seasons, were the intimates of the Prince-Colonel. Brummell aspired to a cornetcy in this bril-

liant regiment, and obtained it; nor that alone; he secured, by his manners, or his dress, or his impudence, the favor and companionship—friendship we cannot say—of the prince who commanded it.

By this step his reputation was made, and it was only necessary to keep it up. He had an immense fund of good nature, and, as long as his money lasted, of good spirits, too. Good sayings—that is, witty if not wise—are recorded of him, and his friends pronounced him a charming companion. Introduced, therefore, into the highest circles in England, he could scarcely fail to succeed. Young Cornet Brummell became a great favorite with the fair.

His rise in the regiment was of course rapid: in three years he was at the head of a troop. The onerous duties of a military life, which vacillated between Brighton and London, and consisted chiefly in making one's self agreeable in the mess-room, were too much for our hero. He neglected parade, or arrived too late: it was such a bore to have to dress in a hurry. It is said that he knew the troop he commanded only by the peculiar nose of one of the men, and that when a transfer of men had once been made, rode up to the wrong troop, and supported his mistake by pointing to the nose in question. No fault, however, was found with the Regent's favorite, and Brummel might have risen to any rank if he could have supported the terrific labor of dressing for parade. Then, too, there came wars and rumors of wars, and our gallant captain

shuddered at the vulgarity of shedding blood: the supply of smelling-salts would never have been liberal enough to keep him from fainting on the battle-field. It is said, too, that the regiment was ordered to Manchester. Could anything be more gross or more ill-bred? The idea of figuring before the wives and daughters of cotton-spinners was too fearful; and from one cause or another our brave young captain determined to retire, which he did in 1798.

It was now, therefore, that he commenced the profession of a beau, and he is the Prince of Beaux, as his patron was the Beau of Princes, and as his fame has spread to France and Germany, if only as the inventor of the trouser, and as there is no man who on getting up in the morning does not put on his clothes with more or less reflection as to whether they are the right ones to put on, and as beaux have existed since the days of the emperor of beaux, Alexander the Macedonian, and will probably exist to all time, let us rejoice in the high honor of being permitted to describe how this illustrious genius clothed his poor flesh, and made the most of what God had given him—a body and legs.

The private life of Brummell would in itself serve as a book of manners and habits. The two were his profoundest study; but, alas! his impudence marred the former, and the latter can scarcely be imitated in the present day. Still, as a great example he is yet invaluable, and must be described in all detail.

His morning toilette was a most elaborate affair. Never was Brummell guilty of *déshabille*. Like a true man of business, he devoted the best and earliest hours—and many of them too—to his profession, namely —dressing. His dressing-room was a studio, in which he daily composed that elaborate portrait of George Brummell which was to be exhibited for a few hours in the club-rooms and drawing-rooms of town, only to be taken to pieces again, and made up for the evening. Charles I. delighted to resort of a morning to the studio of Vandyck, and to watch his favorite artist's progress. The Regent George was no less devoted to art, for we are assured by Mr. Raikes that he often visited his favorite beau in the morning to watch his toilet, and would sometimes stay so late that he would send his horses away, insisting on Brummell giving him a quiet dinner, "which generally ended in a deep potation."

There are, no doubt, many fabulous myths floating about concerning this illustrious man; and his biographer, Captain Jesse, seems anxious to defend him from the absurd stories of French writers, who asserted that he employed two glovers to cover his hands, to one of whom was entrusted the thumbs, to the other the fingers and hand, and three barbers to dress his hair, while his boots were polished with champagne, his cravats designed by a celebrated portrait painter, and so forth. These may be pleasant inventions, but Captain Jesse's own account of his toilet, even when

the Beau was broken, and living in elegant poverty abroad, is quite absurd enough to render excusable the ingenious exaggerations of the foreign writer.

The *batterie de toilette*, we are told, was of silver, and included a spitting-dish, for its owner said "he could not spit into clay." Napoleon shaved himself, but Brummell was not quite great enough to do that, just as my Lord So-and-so walks to church on Sunday, while his neighbor, the Birmingham millionaire, can only arrive there in a chariot and pair.

His ablutions took no less than two whole hours! What knowledge might have been gained, what good done in the time he devoted to rubbing his lovely person with a hair-glove! Cleanliness was, in fact, Brummell's religion; perhaps because it is generally set down as "next to godliness," a proximity with which the Beau was quite satisfied, for he never attempted to pass on to that next stage. Poor fool, he might rub every particle of moisture off the skin of his body—he might be clean as a kitten—but he could not and did not purify his mind with all this friction; and the man who would have fainted to see a black speck upon his shirt, was not at all shocked at the indecent conversation in which he and his companions occasionally indulged.

The body cleansed, the face had next to be brought up as near perfection as nature would allow. With a small looking-glass in one hand, and tweezers in the other, he carefully removed the tiniest hairs that he

could discover on his cheeks or chin, enduring the pain like a martyr.

Then came the shirt, which was in his palmy days changed three times a day, and then in due course the great business of the cravat. Captain Jesse's minute account of the process of tying this can surely be relied on, and presents one of the most ludicrous pictures of folly and vanity that can be imagined. Had Brummell never lived, and a novelist or play-writer described the toilet which Captain Jesse affirms to have been his daily achievement, he would have had the critics about him with the now common phrase—"This book is a tissue, not only of improbabilities, but of actual impossibilities." The collar, then, was so large, that in its natural condition it rose high above the wearer's head, and some ingenuity was required to reduce it by delicate folds to exactly that height which the Beau judged to be correct. Then came the all-majestic white neck-tie, a foot in breadth. It is not to be supposed that Brummell had the neck of a swan or a camel—far from it. The worthy fool had now to undergo, with admirable patience, the mysterious process known to our papas as "creasing down." The head was thrown back, as if ready for a dentist, the stiff white tie applied to the throat, and gradually wrinkled into half its actual breadth by the slow downward movement of the chin. When all was done, we can imagine that comfort was sacrificed to elegance, as it was then considered, and that the sudden appearance

of Venus herself could not have induced the deluded individual to turn his head in a hurry.

It is scarcely profitable to follow this lesser deity into all the details of his self-adornment. It must suffice to say that he affected an extreme neatness and simplicity of dress, every item of which was studied and discussed for many an hour. In the mornings he was still guilty of hessians and pantaloons, or "tops" and buckskins, with a blue coat and buff waistcoat. The costume is not so ancient but that one may tumble now and then on a country squire who glories in it and denounces us juveniles as "bears" for want of a similar precision. Poor Brummell, he cordially hated the country squires, and would have wanted rouge for a week if he could have dreamed that his pet attire would, some fifty years later, be represented only by one of that class which he was so anxious to exclude from Watier's.

But it was in the evening that he displayed his happy invention of the trouser, or rather its introduction from Germany. This article he wore very tight to the leg, and buttoned over the ankle, exactly as we see it in old prints of "the fashion." Then came the wig, and on that the hat. It is a vain and thankless task to defend Brummell from the charge of being a dandy. If one proof of his devotion to dress were wanted, it would be the fact that his hat, once stuck jauntily on one side of the wig, was never removed in the street even to salute a lady—so that, inasmuch as

he sacrificed his manners to his appearance, he may be fairly set down as a fop.

The perfect artist could not be expected to be charitable to the less successful. Dukes and princes consulted him on the make of their coats, and discussed tailors with him with as much solemnity as divines might dispute on a mystery of religion. Brummell did not spare them. "Bedford," said he, to the duke of that name, fingering a new garment which his grace had submitted to his inspection, "do you call this *thing* a coat?" Again, meeting a noble acquaintance who wore shoes in the morning, he stopped and asked him what he had got upon his feet. "Oh! shoes are they?" quoth he, with a well-bred sneer, "I thought they were slippers." He was even ashamed of his own brother, and when the latter came to town, begged him to keep to the back streets till his new clothes were sent home. Well might his friend the Regent say, that he was "a mere tailor's dummy to hang clothes upon."

But in reality Brummell was more. He had some sharpness and some taste. But the former was all brought out in sneers, and the latter in snuff-boxes. His whole mind could have been put into one of these. He had a splendid collection of them, and was famous for the grace with which he opened the lid of his box with the thumb of the hand that carried it, while he delicately took his pinch with two fingers of the other. This and his bow were his chief acquirements, and his reputation for manners was based on the distinction of

his manner. He could not drive in a public conveyance, but he could be rude to a well-meaning lady; he never ate vegetables—*one* pea he confessed to—but he did not mind borrowing from his friends money which he knew he could never return. He was a great gentleman, a gentleman of his patron's school—in short, a well-dressed snob. But one thing is due to Brummell: he made the assumption of being "a gentleman" so thoroughly ridiculous that few men of keen sense care now for the title: at least, not as a class-distinction. Nor is it to be wondered at; when your tailor's assistant is "a gentleman," and would be mightily disgusted at being called anything else, you, with your indomitable pride of caste, can scarcely care for the patent.

Brummell's claim to the title was based on his walk, his coat, his cravat, and the grace with which he indulged, as Captain Jesse delightfully calls it, "the nasal pastime" of taking snuff: all the rest was impudence; and many are the anecdotes—most of them familiar as household words—which are told of his impertinence. The story of Mrs. Johnson-Thompson is one of those oft-told tales which, from having become Joe Millers, have gradually passed out of date and been almost forgotten. Two rival party-givers rejoiced in the aristocratic names of Johnson and Thompson. The former lived near Finsbury, the latter near Grosvenor Square, and Mrs. Thompson was somehow sufficiently fashionable to expect the Regent himself at her assemblies. Brummell, among other impertinences,

was fond of going where he was not invited or wanted. The two rivals gave a ball on the same evening, and a card was sent to the Beau by her of Finsbury. He chose to go to the Grosvenor Square house, in hopes of meeting the Regent, then his foe. Mrs. Thompson was justly disgusted, and with a vulgarity quite deserved by the intruder, told him he was not invited. The Beau made a thousand apologies, hummed, hawed, and drew a card from his pocket. It was the rival's invitation, and was indignantly denounced. "Dear me, how very unfortunate," said the Beau, "but you know Johnson and Thompson—I mean Thompson and Johnson—are so very much alike. Mrs. Johnson-Thompson, I wish you a very good evening."

Perhaps there is no vulgarity greater than that of rallying people on their surnames, but our exquisite gentleman had not wit enough to invent one superior to such a puerile amusement. Thus, on one occasion, he woke up at three in the morning a certain Mr. Snodgrass, and when the worthy put his head out of the window in alarm, said quietly, "Pray, sir, is your name Snodgrass?"—"Yes, sir, it is Snodgrass."—"Snodgrass—Snodgrass—it is a very singular name. Good-bye, Mr. *Snodgrass*." There was more wit in his remark to Poodle Byng, a well-known puppy, whom he met one day driving in the Park with a French dog in his curricle. "Ah," cried the Beau, "how d'ye do, Byng? a family vehicle, I see."

It seems incredulous to modern gentlemen that such

a man should have been tolerated even at a club. Take, for instance, his vulgar treatment of Lord Mayor Combe, whose name we still see with others over many a public-house in London, and who was then a most prosperous brewer and thriving gambler. At Brookes' one evening the Beau and the Brewer were playing at the same table. "Come, *Mash-tub*," cried the "gentleman," "what do you set?" Mash-tub unresentingly set a pony, and the Beau won twelve of him in succession. Pocketing his cash, he made him a bow, and exclaimed, "Thank you, Alderman, in future I shall drink no porter but yours." But Combe was worthy of his namesake, Shakespeare's friend, and answered very aptly, "I wish, sir, that every *other* blackguard in London would tell me the same."

Then again, after ruining a young fool of fortune at the tables, and being reproached by the youth's father for leading his son astray, he replied with charming affectation, "Why, sir, I did all I could for him. I once gave him my arm all the way from White's to Brookes'!"

When Brummell really wanted a dinner, while at Calais, he could not give up his impertinence for the sake of it. Lord Westmoreland called on him, and, perhaps out of compassion, asked him to dine at *three o'clock* with him. "Your Lordship is very kind," said the Beau, "but really I could not *feed* at such an hour." Sooner or later he was glad to *feed* with any one who was toady enough to ask him. He was once

placed in a delightfully awkward position from having accepted the invitation of a charitable but vulgar-looking Britisher at Calais. He was walking with Lord Sefton, when the individual passed and nodded familiarly. "Who's your friend, Brummell?"—"Not mine, he must be bowing to you." But presently the man passed again, and this time was cruel enough to exclaim, "Don't forget, Brum, don't forget—goose at four!" The poor Beau must have wished the earth to open under him. He was equally impudent in the way in which he treated an old acquaintance who arrived at the town to which he had retreated, and of whom he was fool enough to be ashamed. He generally took away their characters summarily, but on one occasion was frightened almost out of his wits by being called to account for this conduct. An officer who had lost his nose in an engagement in the Peninsula, called on him, and in very strong terms requested to know why the Beau had reported that he was a retired hatter. His manner alarmed the rascal, who apologized, and protested that there must be a mistake; he had never said so. The officer retired, and as he was going, Brummell added: "Yes, it must be a mistake, for now I think of it, I never dealt with a hatter without a nose."

So much for the good breeding of this friend of George IV. and the Duke of York.

His affectation was quite as great as his impudence: and he won the reputation of fastidiousness—nothing

gives more prestige—by dint of being openly rude. No hospitality or kindness melted him, when he thought he could gain a march. At one dinner, not liking the champagne, he called to the servant to give him "some more of that cider:" at another, to which he was invited in days when a dinner was a charity to him, after helping himself to a wing of capon, and trying a morsel of it, he took it up in his napkin, called to his dog—he was generally accompanied by a puppy, even to parties, as if one at a time were not enough—and presenting it to him, said aloud, "Here, *Atons*, try if you can get your teeth through that, for I'm d—d if I can."

To the last he resented offers of intimacy from those whom he considered his inferiors, and as there are ladies enough everywhere, he had ample opportunity for administering rebuke to those who pressed into his society. On one occasion he was sauntering with a friend at Caen under the window of a lady who longed for nothing more than to have the great *arbiter elegantiarum* at her house. When seeing him beneath, she put her head out, and called out to him, "Good evening, Mr. Brummell, won't you come up and take tea?" The Beau looked up with extreme severity expressed on his face, and replied, "Madam, you take medicine—you take a walk—you take a liberty—but you *drink* tea," and walked on, having, it may be hoped, cured the lady of her admiration.

In the life of such a man there could not of course

be much striking incident. He lived for "society," and the whole of his story consists in his rise and fall in that narrow world. Though admired and sought after by the women—so much so that at his death his chief assets were locks of hair, the only things he could not have turned into money—he never married. Wedlock might have sobered him, and made him a more sensible, if not more respectable member of society, but his advances towards matrimony never brought him to the crisis. He accounted for one rejection in his usual way. "What could I do, my dear *fellar*," he lisped, "when I actually saw Lady Mary eat cabbage?" At another time he is said to have induced some deluded young creature to elope with him from a ball-room, but managed the affair so ill, that the lovers (?) were caught in the next street, and the affair came to an end. He wrote rather ecstatic love-letters to Lady Marys and Miss ——s, gave married ladies advice on the treatment of their spouses, and was tender to various widows, but though he went on in this way through life, he was never, it would seem, in love, from the mere fact that he was incapable of passion.

Perhaps he was too much of a woman to care much for women. He was certainly egregiously effeminate. About the only creatures he could love were poodles. When one of his dogs, from over-feeding, was taken ill, he sent for two dog-doctors, and consulted very gravely with them on the remedies to be applied.

The canine physicans came to the conclusion that she must be bled. "Bled!" said Brummell, in horror; "I shall leave the room: inform me when the operation is over." When the dog died, he shed tears—probably the only ones he had shed since childhood: and though at that time receiving money from many an old friend in England, complained, with touching melancholy, "that he had lost the only friend he had!" His grief lasted three whole days, during which he shut himself up, and would see no one; but we are not told that he ever thus mourned over any human being.

His effeminacy was also shown in his dislike to field-sports. His shooting exploits were confined to the murder of a pair of pet pigeons perched on a roof, while he confessed, as regards hunting, that it was a bore to get up so early in the morning only to have one's boots and leathers splashed by galloping farmers. However, hunting was a fashion, and Brummell must needs appear to hunt. He therefore kept a stud of hunters in his better days, near Belvoir, the Duke of Rutland's, where he was a frequent visitor, and if there was a near meet, would ride out in pink and tops to see the hounds break cover, follow through a few gates, and return to the more congenial atmosphere of the drawing-room. He, however, condescended to bring his taste to bear on the hunting-dress; and, it is said, introduced white tops instead of the ancient mahoganies. That he *could* ride there seems reason

to believe, but it is equally probable that he was afraid to do so. His valor was certainly composed almost entirely of its "better part," and indeed had so much prudence in it that it may be doubted if there was any of the original stock left. Once when he had been taking away somebody's character, the "friend" of the maligned gentleman entered his apartment, and very menacingly demanded satisfaction for his principal, unless an apology were tendered "in five minutes." "Five minutes!" answered the exquisite, as pale as death, "five seconds, or sooner if you like."

Brummell was no fool, in spite of his follies. He had talents of a mediocre kind, if he had chosen to make a better use of them. Yet the general opinion was not in favor of his wisdom. He quite deserved Sheridan's cool satire for his affectation, if not for his want of mind.

The Wit and the Beau met one day at Charing Cross, and it can well be imagined that the latter was rather disgusted at being seen so far east of St. James's Street, and drawled out to Sheridan, "Sherry, my dear boy, don't mention that you saw me in this filthy part of the town, though, perhaps, I am rather severe, for his Grace of Northumberland resides somewhere about this spot, if I don't mistake. The fact is, my dear boy, I have been in the d——d City, to the Bank: I wish they would remove it to the West End, for re-all-y it is quite a bore to go to such a place; more

particularly as one cannot be seen in one's own equipage beyond Somerset House," etc. etc. etc. in the Brummellian style.

"Nay, my good fellow," was the answer to this peroration, "travelling from the East? impossible!"

"Why, my dear boy, why?"

"Because the wise men came from the East."

"So, then, sa-ar—you think me a fool?"

"By no means; I know you to be one," quoth Sherry, and turned away. It is due to both the parties to this anecdote to state that it is quite apocryphal, and rests on the slenderest authority. However, whether fool or not, Brummell has one certain, though small, claim upon certain small readers. Were you born in a modern generation, where scraps of poetry were forbidden in your nursery, and no other pabulum was offered to your infant stomach but the rather dull biographies of rather dull, though very upright men?—if so, I pity you. Old airs of a jaunty jig-like kind are still haunting the echoes of my brain. Among them is—

"The butterfly was a gentleman,
Which nobody can refute:
He left his lady-love at home,
And roamed in a velvet suit."

I remember often to have ruminated over this character of an innocent, and, I believe, calumniated, insect. He was a gentleman, and the consequences thereof

were twofold: he abandoned the young woman who had trusted her affections to him, and attired his person in a complete costume of the best Lyons silk-velvet, *not* the proctor's velvet, which Theodore felt with thumb and finger, impudently asking "How much a yard?" I secretly resolved to do the same thing as Mr. Butterfly when I came of age. But the said Mr. Butterfly had a varied and somewhat awful history, all of which was narrated in various ditties chanted by my nurse. I could not quite join in her vivid assertion that she *would*

"—— be a butterfly,
Born in a bower,
Christened in a tea-pot,
And dead in an hour."

Ætat. four, life is dear, and the idea of that early demise was far from welcome to me. I privily agreed that I would *not* be a butterfly. But there was no end to the history of this very inconstant insect in our nursery lore. We didn't care a drop of honey for Dr. Watts's "Busy Bee;" we infinitely preferred the account—not in the "Morning Post"—of the "Butterfly's Ball" and the "Grasshopper's Feast;" and few, perhaps, have ever given children more pleasures of imagination than William Roscoe, its author. There were some amongst us, however, who were already being weaned to a knowledge of life's mysterious changes, and we sought the third volume of the

romance of the flitting gaudy thing in a little poem called "The Butterfly's Funeral."

Little dreamed we, when in our pretty little song-books we saw the initial "B." at the bottom of these verses, that a real human butterfly had written them, and that they conveyed a solemn prognostication of a fate that was *not* his. Little we dreamed, as we lisped out the verses, that the "gentleman who roamed in a" not velvet but "plum-colored suit," according to Lady Hester Stanhope, was the illustrious George Brummell. The Beau wrote these trashy little rhymes—pretty in their way—and, since I was once a child and learnt them off by heart, I will not cast a stone at them. Brummell indulged in such trifling poetizing, but never went farther. It is a pity he did not write his memoirs; they would have added a valuable page to the history of "Vanity Fair."

Brummell's London glory lasted from 1798 to 1816. His chief club was Watier's. It was a superb assemblage of gamesters and fops—knaves and fools; and it is difficult to say which element predominated. For a time Brummell was monarch there; but his day of reckoning came at last. Byron and Moore, Sir Henry Mildmay and Mr. Pierrepoint, were among the members. Play ran high there, and Brummell once won nearly as much as his squandered patrimony, £26,000. Of course he not only lost it again, but much more—indeed his whole capital. It was after some heavy loss that he was walking home through Berkeley Street with

Mr. Raikes, when he saw something glittering in the gutter, picked it up, and found it to be a crooked sixpence. Like all small-minded men, he had a great fund of superstition, and he wore the talisman of good luck for some time. For two years, we are told, after this finding of treasure-trove, success attended him in play—macao, the very pith of hazard, was the chief game at Watier's—and he attributed it all to the sixpence. At last he lost it, and luck turned against him. So goes the story. It is probably much more easily accountable. Few men played honestly in those days without losing to the dishonest, and we have no reason to charge the Beau with malpractice. However this may be, his losses at play first brought about his ruin. The Jews were, of course, resorted to; and if Brummell did not, like Charles Fox, keep a Jerusalem Chamber, it was only because the sum total of his fortune was pretty well known to the money-lenders.

> "Then came the change, the check, the fall:
> Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
> There is one remedy for all."

This remedy was the crossing of the Channel, a crossing kept by beggars, who levy a heavy toll on those who pass over it.

The decline of the Beau was rapid, but not without its *éclat*. A breach with his royal patron led the way. It is presumed that every reader of these volumes has heard the famous story of "Wales, ring the bell!" but not all may know its particulars.

A deep impenetrable mystery hangs over this story. Perhaps some German of the twenty-first century—some future Giffard, or who not—will put his wits to work to solve the riddle. In very sooth *il ne vaut pas la chandelle.* A quarrel did take place between George the Prince and George the Less, but of its causes no living mortal is cognizant: we can only give the received versions. It appears, then, that dining with H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, Master Brummell asked him to ring the bell. Considering the intimacy between them, and that the Regent often sacrificed his dignity to his amusement, there was nothing extraordinary in this. But it is added that the Prince did ring the bell in question—unhappy bell to jar so between two such illustrious friends!—and when the servant came, ordered "Mr. Brummell's carriage!" Another version palms off the impertinence on a drunken midshipman, who, being related to the Comptroller of the Household, had been invited to dinner by the Regent. Another yet states that Brummell, being asked to ring the said bell, replied, "Your Royal Highness is close to it." No one knows the truth of the legend, any more than whether Homer was a man or a myth. It surely does not matter. The friends quarrelled, and perhaps it was time they should do so, for they had never improved one another's morals: but it is only fair to the Beau to add that he always denied the whole affair, and that he himself gave as the cause of the quarrel his own sarcasms on the Prince's increas-

ing corpulency, and his resemblance to Mrs. Fitzherbert's porter, "Big Ben." Certainly some praise is due to the Beau for the *sang froid* with which he appeared to treat the matter, though in reality dreadfully cut up about it. He lounged about, made amusing remarks on his late friend and patron, swore he would "cut" him, and in short behaved with his usual *aplomb*. The "Wales, ring the bell," was sufficient proof of his impudence, but "Who's your fat friend?" was really good.

It is well known, in all probability, that George IV. contemplated with as much disgust and horror the increasing rotundity of his "presence" as ever a maiden lady of a certain age did her first gray hair. Soon after the bell affair, the royal beau met his former friend in St. James's Street, and resolved to cut him. This was attacking Brummell with his own pet weapon, but not with success. Each antagonist was leaning on the arm of a friend. "Jack Lee," who was thus supporting the Beau, was intimate with the Prince, who, to make the cut the more marked, stopped and talked to him without taking the slightest notice of Brummell. After a time both parties moved on, and then came the moment of triumph and revenge. It was sublime! Turning round half way, so that his words could not fail to be heard by the retreating Regent, the Beau asked of his companion in his usual drawl, "Well, Jack, who's your fat friend?" The coolness, presumption, and impertinence of the ques-

tion perhaps made it the best thing the Beau ever said, and from that time the Prince took care not to risk another encounter with him.[1]

Brummell was scotched rather than killed by the Prince's indifference. He at once resolved to patronize his brother, the Duke of York, and found in him a truer friend. The duchess, who had a particular fondness for dogs, of which she is said to have kept no fewer, at one time, than a hundred, added the puppy Brummell to the list, and treated him with a kindness in which little condescension was mixed. But neither impudence nor the blood-royal can keep a man out of debt, especially when he plays. The Beau got deeper and deeper into the difficulty, and at last some mysterious quarrel about money with a gentleman who thenceforward went by the name of Dick the Dandy-killer, obliged him to think of place and poverty in another land. He looked in vain for aid, and among others Scrope Davies was written to to lend him "two hundred," "because his money was all in the three per cents." Scrope replied laconically—

"My dear George,

"It is very unfortunate, but *my* money is all in the three per cents. Yours,

S. Davies."

[1] Another version, given by Captain Jesse, represents this to have taken place at a ball given at the Argyle Rooms in July, 1813, by Lord Alvanley, Sir Henry Mildmay, Mr. Pierrepoint, and Mr. Brummell.

It was the last attempt. The Beau went to the opera as usual, and drove away from it clear off to Dover, whence the packet took him to safety and slovenliness in the ancient town of Calais. His few effects were sold after his departure. Porcelaine, buhl, a drawing or two, double-barrelled Mantons (probably never used), plenty of old wine, linen, furniture, and a few well-bound books, were the Beau's assets. His debts were with half the chief tradesmen of the West End and a large number of his personal friends.

The climax is reached: henceforth Master George Bryan Brummell goes rapidly and gracefully down the hill of life.

The position of a Calais beggar was by no means a bad one, if the reduced individual had any claim whatever to distinction. A blackmail was sedulously levied by the outcasts and exiles of that town on every Englishman who passed through it; and in those days it was customary to pass some short time in this entrance of France. The English "residents" were always on the lookout, generally crowding round the packet-boat, and the new arrival was sure to be accosted by some old and attached friend, who had not seen him for years. Just as Buttons, who is always breaking the plates and tumblers, has the invariable mode of accounting for his carelessness, "they fell apart, sir, in my 'ands!" so these expatriated Britons had always a tale of confidence misplaced—security for a bond—bail for a delinquent, or in short any hard case, which

compelled them, much against their wills, to remain "for a period" on the shores of France. To such men, whom you had known in seven-guinea waistcoats at White's and Watier's, and found in seven-shilling coats on the Calais pier, it was impossible to refuse your five-pound note, and in time the blackmail of Calais came to be reckoned among the established expenses of a Continental tour.

Brummell was a distinguished beggar of this description, and managed so adroitly that the new arrivals thought themselves obliged by Mr. Brummell's acceptance of their donations. The man who could not eat cabbages, drive in a hackney-coach, or wear less than three shirts a day, was now supported by voluntary contributions, and did not see anything derogatory to a gentleman in their acceptance. If Brummell had now turned his talents to account; if he had practised his painting, in which he was not altogether despicable, or his poetry, in which he had already had some trifling success; if he had even engaged himself as a waiter at Quillacq's, or given lessons in the art of deportment, his fine friends from town might have cut him, but posterity would have withheld its blame. He was a beggar of the merriest kind. While he wrote letters to friends in England, asking for remittances, and describing his wretched condition on a bed of straw and eating bran bread, he had a good barrel of Dorchester ale in his lodgings, his usual glass of maraschino, and his bottle of claret after dinner; and though living on

charity, could order new snuff-boxes to add to his collection, and new knick-knacks to adorn his room. There can be no pity for such a man, and we have no pity for him, whatever the rest of the world may feel.

Nothing can be more contemptible than the gradual downfall of the broken beau. Yet, if it were doubted that his soul ever rose above the collar of a coat or the brim of a hat, his letters to Mr. Raikes in the time of his poverty would settle the question. "I heard of you the other day in a waistcoat that does you considerable credit, spick-and-span from Paris, a broad stripe, salmon-color, and *cramoisé*. Don't let them laugh you into a relapse—into the Gothic—as that of your former English simplicity." He speaks of the army of occupation as "rascals in red coats waiting for embarkation." "English education," he says in another letter, "may be all very well to instruct the hemming of handkerchiefs, and the ungainly romps of a country-dance, but nothing else; and it would be a poor consolation to your declining years to see your daughters come into the room upon their elbows, and to find their accomplishments limited to broad native phraseology in conversation, or thumping the 'Woodpecker' upon a discordant spinet." And he proceeds to recommend a "good French formation of manners," and so forth.

Nor did he display any of that dignity and self-respect which are generally supposed to mark the "gentleman." When his late friend and foe, by this time a king, passed through Calais, the Beau, broken in

every sense, had not pride enough to keep out of his way. Many stories are told of the manner in which he pressed himself into George IV.'s notice, but the various legends mostly turn upon a certain snuff-box. According to one quite as reliable as any other, the Prince and the Beau had in their days of amity intended to exchange snuff-boxes, and George the Greater had given George the Less an order on his jeweller for a *tabatière* with his portrait on the top. On their quarrel this order was, with very bad taste, rescinded, although Brummell's snuff-box had already passed into the Prince's hands and had not been returned. It is said that the Beau employed a friend to remind the king of this agreement, and ask for his box; to whom the latter said that the story was all nonsense, and that he supposed "the poor devil," meaning his late intimate friend, wanted £100 and should have it. However, it is doubtful if the money ever reached the "poor devil." The story does not tell over well, for whatever were the failings and faults of George IV., he seems to have had a certain amount of good nature, if not absolutely of good heart, and possessed, at least, sufficient sense of what became a prince to prevent his doing so shabby an act, though he may have defrauded a hundred tradesmen. In those days there *were* such things as "debts of honor," and they were punctiliously attended to. There are, as we have said, various versions of this story, but all tend to show that Brummell courted the notice

of his late master and patron on his way through the place of his exile; and it is not remarkable in a man who borrowed so freely from all his acquaintances, and who was, in fact, in such a state of dependence on their liberality.

Brummell made one grand mistake in his career as a Beau: he outlived himself. For some twenty-four years he survived his flight from England, to which country he never returned. For a time he was an assiduous writer of begging-letters and the plague of his friends. At length he obtained the appointment of consul at the good old Norman town of Caen. This was almost a sinecure, and the Beau took care to keep it so. But no one can account for the extraordinary step he took soon after entering on his consular duties. He wrote to Lord Palmerston, stating that there were no duties attached to the post, and recommending its abolition. This act of suicide is partly explained by a supposed desire to be appointed to some more lively and more lucrative consulate; but in this the Beau was mistaken. The consulate at Caen was vacated in accordance with his suggestion, and Brummell was left penniless, in debt, and to shift for himself. With the aid of an English tradesman, half grocer, half banker, he managed to get through a period of his poverty, but could not long subsist in this way, and the punishment of his vanity and extravagance came at last in his old age. A term of existence in prison did not cure him, and when he was liberated he again resumed his prim-

rose gloves, his eau de Cologne, and his patent *vernis* for his boots, though at that time literally supported by his friends with an allowance of £120 per annum. In the old days of Caen life this would have been equal to £300 a year in England, and certainly quite enough for any bachelor; but the Beau was really a fool. For whom, for what, should he dress and polish his boots at such a quiet place as Caen? Yet he continued to do so, and to run into debt for the polish. When he confessed to having, "so help him Heaven," not four francs in the world, he was ordering this *vernis de Guiton*, at five francs a bottle, from Paris, and calling the provider of it a "scoundrel," because he ventured to ask for his money. What foppery, what folly was all this! How truly worthy of the man who built his fame on the reputation of a coat! Terrible indeed was the hardship that followed his extravagance: he was actually compelled to exchange his white for a black cravat. Poor martyr! after such a trial it is impossible to be hard upon him. So, too, the man who sent repeated begging-letters to the English grocer, Armstrong, threw out of window a new dressing-gown because it was not of the pattern he wished to have.

Retribution for all this folly came in time. His mind went even before his health. Though only some sixty years of age, almost the bloom of some men's life, he lost his memory and his powers of attention. His old ill-manners became positively bad manners.

When feasted and fêted, he could find nothing better to say than "What a half-starved turkey!" At last the Beau was reduced to the level of that slovenliness which he had considered as the next step to perdition. Reduced to one pair of trousers, he had to remain in bed till they were mended. He grew indifferent to his personal appearance, the surest sign of decay. Drivelling, wretched, in debt, an object of contempt to all honest men, he dragged on a miserable existence. Still with his boots in holes, and all the honor of beau-dom gone for ever, he clung to the last to his eau de Cologne, and some few other luxuries, and went down, a fool and a fop, to the grave. To indulge his silly tastes he had to part with one piece of property after another; and at length he was left with little else than the locks of hair of which he had once boasted.

I remember a story of a laborer and his dying wife. The poor woman was breathing her last wishes. "And, I say, William, you'll see the old sow don't kill her young uns?"—"Ay, ay, wife, set thee good."—"And, I say, William, you'll see Lizzie goes to schule reg'lar?"—"Ay, ay, wife, set thee good."—"And, I say, William, you'll see Tommy's breeches is mended against he goes to schule again?"—"Ay, ay, wife, set thee good."—"And, I say, William, you'll see I'm laid proper in the yard?"—William grew impatient. "Now never thee mind them things, wife, I'll see to 'em all. You just go on with your dying." No doubt Brum-

mell's friends heartily wished that he would go on with his dying, for he had already lived too long; but he would live on. He is described in his last days as a miserable, slovenly, half-witted old creature, creeping about to the houses of a few friends he retained or who were kind enough to notice him still, jeered at by the *gamins*, and remarkable now, not for the cleanliness, but the filthiness and raggedness of his attire.

Poor old fool! one cannot but pity him, when wretched, friendless, and miserable as he was, we find him, still graceful, in a poor *café* near the Place Royale, taking his cup of coffee, and when asked for the amount of his bill, answering very vaguely, "Oui, Madame, à la pleine lune, à la pleine lune."

The drivellings of old age are no fit subject for ridicule, yet in the case of a man who had sneered so freely at his fellow creatures, they may afford a useful lesson. One of his fancies was to give imaginary parties, when his tallow dips were all set alight and his servants announced with proper decorum, "The Duchess of Devonshire," "Lord Alvanley," "Mr. Sheridan," or whom not. The poor old idiot received the imaginary visitors with the old bow, and talked to them in the old strain, till his servants announced their imaginary carriages, and he was put drivelling to bed. At last the idiocy became mania. He burnt his books, his relics, his tokens. He ate enormously, and the man who had looked upon beer as the *ne plus ultra* of vulgarity,

was glad to imagine it champagne. Let us not follow the poor maniac through his wanderings. Rather let us throw a veil over all his drivelling wretchedness, and find him at his last gasp, when coat and collar, hat and brim, were all forgotten, when the man who had worn three shirts a day was content to change his linen once a month. What a lesson! what a warning! If Brummell had come to this pass in England, it is hard to say how and where he would have died. He was now utterly penniless, and had no prospect of receiving any remittances. It was determined to remove him to the Hospice du Bon Sauveur, a *Maison de Charité*, where he would be well cared for at no expense. The mania of the poor creature took, as ever, the turn of external preparation. When the landlord of his inn entered to try and induce him to go, he found him with his wig on his knee, his shaving apparatus by his side, and the quondam beau deeply interested in lathering the peruke as a preliminary to shearing it. He resisted every proposal to move, and was carried down stairs, kicking and shrieking. Once lodged in the Hospice, he was treated by the sœurs de charité with the greatest kindness and consideration. An attempt was made to recall him to a sense of his future peril, that he might at least die in a more religious mood than he had lived; but in vain. It is not for us, erring and sinful as we are, to judge any fellow-creature; but perhaps poor Brummell was the last man to whom religion had a meaning. His heart was good; his sins

were more those of vanity than those of hate; it may be that they are regarded mercifully where the fund of mercy is unbounded. God grant that they may be so; or who of us would escape? None but fiends will triumph over the death of any man in sin. Men are not fiends; they must and will always feel for their fellow men, let them die as they will. No doubt Brummell was a fool—a fool of the first water, but that he was equally a knave is not so certain. Let it never be certain to blind man, who cannot read the heart, that any man is a knave. He died on the 30th of March, 1840, and so the last of the Beaux passed away. People have claimed, indeed, for D'Orsay the honor of Brummell's descending mantle, but D'Orsay was not strictly a beau, for he had other and higher tastes than mere dress. It has never been advanced that Brummell's heart was bad, in spite of his many faults. Vanity did all. Vanitas vanitatem. O young men of this age, be warned by a Beau, and flee his doubtful reputation! Peace then to the coat-thinker. Peace to all—to the worst. Let us look within and not judge. It is enough that we are not tried in the same balance.

Theodore Edward Hook

THEODORE EDWARD HOOK.

If it be difficult to say what wit is, it is wellnigh as hard to pronounce what is not wit. In a sad world, mirth hath its full honor, let it come in rags or in purple raiment. The age that patronizes a "Punch" every Saturday, and a pantomime every Christmas, has no right to complain, if it finds itself barren of wits, while a rival age has brought forth her dozens. Mirth is, no doubt, very good. We would see more, not less, of it in this unmirthful land. We would fain imagine the shrunken-cheeked factory-girl singing to herself a happy burden, as she shifts the loom,—the burden of her life—and fain believe that the voice was innocent as the skylark's. But if it be not so—and we know it is not so—shall we quarrel with any one who tries to give the poor care-worn, money-singing public a little laughter for a few pence? No, truly, but it does not follow that the man who raises a titter is, of necessity, a wit. The next age, perchance, will write a book of "Wits and Beaux," in which Mr. Douglas Jerrold, Mr. Mark Lemon, and so on, will represent the *wit* of this passing day; and that future age will not ask so nicely what wit is, and not look for that last solved of riddles, its definition.

Hook has been, by common consent, placed at the head of modern wits. When kings were kings, they bullied, beat, and browbeat their jesters. Now and then they treated them to a few years in the Tower for a little extra impudence. Now that the people are sovereign, the jester fares better—nay, too well. His books or his bon-mots are read with zest and grins; he is invited to his Grace's and implored to my Lord's; he is waited for, watched, pampered like a small Grand Lama, and, in one sentence, the greater the fool, the more fools he makes.

If Theodore Hook had lived in the stirring days of King Henry VIII., he would have sent Messrs. Patch and Co. sharply to the right-about, and been presented with the caps and bells after his first comic song. No doubt he was a jester, a fool in many senses, though he did not, like Solomon's fool, "say in his *heart*" very much. He jested away even the practicals of life, jested himself into disgrace, into prison, into contempt, into the basest employment—that of a libeller tacked on to a party. He was a mimic, too, to whom none could send a challenge; an improvisatore, who beat Italians, Tyroleans, and Syrians hollow, sir, hollow. And lastly—oh! shame of the shuffle-tongued—he was, too, a punster. Yes, one who gloried in puns, a maker of pun upon pun, a man whose whole wit ran into a pun as readily as water rushes into a hollow, who could not keep out of a pun, let him loath it or not,

and who made some of the best and some of the worst on record, but still—puns.

If he was a wit withal, it was *malgré soi*, for fun, not wit, was his "aspiration." Yet the world calls him a wit, and he has a claim to his niche. There was, it is true, many a man in his own set who had more real wit. There were James Smith, Thomas Ingoldsby, Tom Hill, and others. Out of his set, but of his time, there was Sydney Smith, ten times more a wit: but Theodore could amuse, Theodore could astonish, Theodore could be at home anywhere; he had all the impudence, all the readiness, all the indifference of a jester, and a jester he was.

Let any one look at his portrait, and he will doubt if this be the king's jester painted by Holbein, or Mr. Theodore Hook, painted by Eddis. The short, thick nose, the long upper lip, the sensual, whimsical mouth, the twinkling eyes, all belong to the regular maker of fun. Hook was a certificated jester, with a lenient society to hear and applaud him, instead of an irritable tyrant to keep him in order; and he filled his post well. Whether he was more than a jester may well be doubted; yet Coleridge, when he heard him, said: "I have before in my time met with men of admirable promptitude of intellectual power and play of wit, which, as Stillingfleet says,

> 'The rays of wit gild wheresoe'er they strike;'

but I never could have conceived such readiness of

mind and resources of genius to be poured out on the mere subject and impulse of the moment." The poet was wrong in one respect. Genius can in no sense be applied to Hook, though readiness was his chief charm.

The famous Theodore was born in the same year as Byron, 1788, the one on the 22d of January, the other on the 22d of September; so the poet was only eight months his senior. Hook, like many other wits, was a second son. Ladies of sixty or seventy well remember the name of Hook as that which accompanied their earliest miseries. It was in learning Hook's exercises, or primers, or whatever they were called, that they first had their fingers slapped over the piano-forte. The father of Theodore, no doubt, was the unwitting cause of much unhappiness to many a young lady in her teens. Hook *père* was an organist at Norwich. He came up to town, and was engaged at Marylebone Gardens and at Vauxhall; so that Theodore had no excuse for being of decidedly plebeian origin, and, Tory as he was, he was not fool enough to aspire to patricianism.

Theodore's family was, in real fact, Theodore himself. He made the name what it is, and raised himself to the position he at one time held. Yet he had a brother whose claims to celebrity are not altogether ancillary. James Hook was fifteen years older than Theodore. After leaving Westminster School he was sent to immortal Skimmery (St. Mary's Hall), Oxford, which has fostered so many great men—and spoiled

them. He was advanced in the church from one preferment to another, and ultimately became Dean of Worcester. The character of the reverend gentleman is pretty well known, but it is unnecessary here to go into it farther. He is only mentioned as Theodore's brother in this sketch.[1] He was a dabbler in literature, like his brother, but scarcely to the same extent a dabbler in wit.

The younger son of "Hook's Exercises" developed early enough a taste for ingenious lying—so much admired in his predecessor, Sheridan. He "fancied himself" a genius, and therefore, from school-age, not amenable to the common laws of ordinary men. Frequenters of the now fashionable prize-ring—thanks to two brutes who have brought that degraded pastime into prominent notice—will hear a great deal about a man "fancying himself." It is common slang and needs little explanation. Hook "fancied himself" from an early period, and continued to "fancy himself," in spite of repeated disgraces, till a very mature age. At Harrow he was the contemporary, but scarcely the friend, of Lord Byron. No two characters could have been more unlike. Every one knows, more or less, what Byron's was; it need only be said that Hook's was the reverse of it in every respect. Byron felt where Hook laughed. Byron was morbid where Hook

[1] Dr. James Hook, Dean of Worcester, was father to Dr. Walter Farquhar Hook, now the excellent Dean of Chichester, late Vicar of Leeds.

was gay. Byron abjured with disgust the social vices to which he was introduced: Hook fell in with them. Byron indulged in vice in a romantic way; Hook in the coarsest. There is some excuse for Byron, much as he has been blamed. There is little or no excuse for Hook, much as his faults have been palliated. The fact is that goodness of heart will soften, in men's minds, any or all misdemeanors. Hook, in spite of many vulgar witticisms and cruel jokes, seems to have had a really good heart.

I have it on the authority of one of Hook's most intimate friends, that he was capable of any act of kindness, and by way of instance of his goodness of heart, I am told by the same person that he on one occasion quitted all his town amusements to solace the spirit of a friend in the country who was in serious trouble. I, of course, refrain from giving names: but the same person informs me that much of his time was devoted in a like manner to relieving, as far as possible, the anxiety of his friends, often, indeed, arising from his own carelessness. It is due to Hook to make this impartial statement before entering on a sketch of his "Sayings and Doings," which must necessarily leave the impression that he was a heartless man.

Old Hook, the father, soon perceived the value of his son's talents: and, determined to turn them to account, encouraged his natural inclination to song-writing. At the age of sixteen Theodore wrote a kind of comic opera, to which his father supplied the music.

This was called "The Soldier's Return." It was followed by others, and young Hook, not yet out of his teens, managed to keep a Drury Lane audience alive, as well as himself and family. It must be remembered, however, that Liston and Mathews could make almost any piece amusing. The young author was introduced behind the scenes through his father's connection with the theatre, and often played the fool under the stage while others were playing it for him above it, practical jokes being a passion with him which he developed thus early. These tricks were not always very good-natured, which may be said of many of his jokes out of the theatre.

He soon showed evidence of another talent, that of acting as well as writing pieces. Assurance was one of the main features of his character, and to it he owed his success in society; but it is a remarkable fact, that on his first appearance before an audience he entirely lost all his nerve, turned pale, and could scarcely utter a syllable. He rapidly recovered, however, and from this time became a favorite performer in private theatricals, in which he was supported by Mathews and Mrs. Mathews, and some amateurs who were almost equal to any professional actors. His attempts were, of course, chiefly in broad farce and roaring burlesque, in which his comic face, with its look of mock gravity and the twinkle of the eyes, itself excited roars of laughter. Whether he would have succeeded as well in sober comedy or upon public boards may well be doubted. Probably he

would not have given to the profession that careful attention and entire devotion that are necessary to bring forward properly the highest natural talents. It is said that for a long time he was anxious to take to the stage as a profession, but, perhaps—as the event seems to show—unfortunately for him, he was dissuaded from what his friends must have thought a very rash step, and in after years he took a violent dislike to the profession. Certainly the stage could not have offered more temptations than did the society in which he afterwards mixed; and perhaps under any circumstances Hook, whose moral education had been neglected and whose principles were never very good, would have lived a life more or less vicious, though he might not have died as he did.

Hook, however, was not long in coming very prominently before the public in another capacity. Of all stories told about him, none are more common or more popular than those which relate to his practical jokes and hoaxes. Thank Heaven, the world no longer sees amusement in the misery of others, and the fashion of such clever performances is gone out. It is fair, however, to premise, that while the cleverest of Hook's hoaxes were of a victimizing character, a large number were just the reverse, and his admirers affirm, not without some reason, that when he had got a dinner out of a person whom he did not know by an ingenious lie, admirably supported, he fully paid for it in the amusement he afforded his host and the ringing metal of his

wit. As we have all been boys—except those that were girls—and not all of us very good boys, we can appreciate that passion for robbery which began with orchards and passed on to knockers. It is difficult to sober middle age to imagine what entertainment there can be in that breach of the eighth commandment, which is generally regarded as innocent. As Sheridan swindled in fun, so Hook, as a young man, robbed in fun, as hundreds of medical students and others have done before and since. Hook, however, was a proficient in the art, and would have made a successful "cracksman" had he been born in the Seven Dials. He collected a complete museum of knockers, bell-pulls, wooden Highlanders, barbers' poles, and shop signs of all sorts. On one occasion he devoted a whole fortnight to the abstraction of a golden eagle over a shop window, by means of a lasso. A fellow dilettante in the art had confidentially informed him of its whereabouts, adding that he himself despaired of ever obtaining it. At length Hook invited his friend to dinner, and on the removal of the cover of what was supposed to be the joint, the work of art appeared served up and appropriately garnished. Theodore was radiant with triumph; but the friend, probably thinking that there ought to be honor among thieves, was highly indignant at being thus surpassed.

Another achievement of this kind was the robbery of a life-sized Highlander, who graced the door of some unsuspecting tobacconist. There was little dif-

ficulty in the mere displacement of the figure; the troublesome part of the business was to get the bare-legged Celt home to the museum, where probably many a Liliputian of his race was already awaiting him. A cloak, a hat, and Hook's ready wit effected the transfer. The first was thrown over him, the second set upon his bonneted head, and a passing hackney coach hailed by his captor, who before the unsuspecting driver could descend, had opened the door, pushed in the prize, and whispered to Jehu, "My friend—very respectable man—but rather tipsy." How he managed to get him out again at the end of the journey we are not told.

Hook was soon a successful and valuable writer of light pieces for the stage. But farces do not live, and few of Hook's are now favorites with a public which is always athirst for something new. The incidents of most of the pieces—many of them borrowed from the French—excited laughter by their very improbability; but the wit which enlivened them was not of a high order, and Hook, though so much more recent than Sheridan, has disappeared before him.

But his hoaxes were far more famous than his collection of curiosities, and quite as much to the purpose; and the imprudence he displayed in them was only equalled by the quaintness of the humor which suggested them. Who else would have ever thought, for instance, of covering a white horse with black wafers, and driving it in a gig along a Welsh high-

road, merely for the satisfaction of being stared at? It was almost worthy of Barnum. Or who, with less assurance, could have played so admirably on the credulity of a lady and daughters fresh from the country as he did, at the trial of Lord Melville? The lady, who stood next to him, was, naturally, anxious to understand the proceedings, and betrayed her ignorance at once by a remark which she made to her daughter about the procession of the Lords into the House. When the bishops entered in full episcopal costume, she applied to Hook to know who were "those gentlemen." "Gentlemen?" quoth Hook, with charming simplicity; "ladies, I think you mean; at any rate, those are the dowager peeresses in their own right." Question followed question as the procession came on, and Theodore indulged his fancy more and more. At length the Speaker, in full robes, became the subject of inquiry. "And pray, sir, who is that fine-looking person?"—"That, ma'am, is Cardinal Wolsey," was the calm and audacious reply. This was too much even for Sussex; and the lady drew herself up in majestic indignation. "We know better than that, sir," she replied: "Cardinal Wolsey has been dead many a good year." Theodore was unmoved. "No such thing, my dear madam," he answered, without the slightest sign of perturbation: "I know it has been generally reported so in the country, but without the slightest foundation; the newspapers, you know, will say anything."

But the hoax of hoaxes, the one which filled the papers of the time for several days, and which, eventually, made its author the very prince of hoaxsters, if such a term can be admitted, was that of Berners Street. Never, perhaps, was so much trouble expended, or so much attention devoted, to so frivolous an object. In Berners Street there lived an elderly lady, who, for no reason that can be ascertained, had excited the animosity of the young Theodore Hook, who was then just of age. Six weeks were spent in preparation, and three persons engaged in the affair. Letters were sent off in every direction, and Theodore Hook's autograph, if it could have any value, must have been somewhat low in the market at that period, from the number of applications which he wrote. On the day in question he and his accomplices seated themselves at a window in Berners Street, opposite to that unfortunate Mrs. Tottenham, of No 54, and there enjoyed the fun. Advertisements, announcements, letters, circulars, and what not, had been most freely issued, and were as freely responded to. A score of sweeps, all "invited to attend professionally," opened the ball at a very early hour, and claimed admittance, in virtue of the notice they had received. The maid-servant had only just time to assure them that all the chimneys were clean, and their services were not required, when some dozen of coal-carts drew up as near as possible to the ill-fated house. New protestations, new indignation. The grimy and irate coalheavers were still being dis-

coursed with, when a bevy of neat and polite individuals arrived from different quarters, bearing each under his arm a splendid ten-guinea wedding-cake. The maid grew distracted; her mistress was single, and had no intention of doubling herself; there must be some mistake; the confectioners were dismissed, in a very different humor to that in which they had come. But they were scarcely gone when crowds began to storm the house, all "on business." Rival doctors met in astonishment and disgust, prepared for an *accouchement;* undertakers stared one another mutely in the face as they deposited at the door coffins made to order—elm or oak—so many feet and so many inches; the clergymen of all the neighboring parishes, high church or low church, were ready to minister to the spiritual wants of the unfortunate moribund, but retired in disgust when they found that some forty fishmongers had been engaged to purvey "cod's head and lobsters" for a person professing to be on the brink of the grave.

The street now became the scene of fearful distraction. Furious tradesmen of every kind were ringing the house-bell and rapping the knocker for admittance —such, at least, as could press through the crowd as far as the house. Bootmakers arrived with Hessians and Wellingtons—"as per order"—or the most delicate of dancing-shoes for the sober old lady; haberdashers had brought the last new thing in evening dress, "quite the fashion," and "very chaste;" hat-makers, from

Lincoln and Bennett down to the Hebrew vendor in Marylebone Lane, arrived with their crown-pieces; butchers' boys, on stout little nags, could not get near enough to deliver the legs of mutton which had been ordered; the lumbering coal-carts "still stopped the way." A crowd—the easiest curiosity in the world to collect—soon gathered round the motley mob of butchers, bakers, candlestick-makers, and makers and sellers of everything else that mortal can want; the mob thronged the pavement, the carts filled the road, and soon the carriages of the noble of the land dashed up in all the panoply of state, and a demand was made to clear the way for the Duke of Gloucester, for the Governor of the Bank, the Chairman of the East India Company, and last, but, oh! not least, the grandee whose successor the originator of the plot afterwards so admirably satirized—the great Lord Mayor himself. The consternation, disgust, and terror of the elderly female, the delight and chuckling of Theodore and his accomplices, seated at a window on the opposite side of the road, "can be more easily imagined than described;" but what were the feelings of tradesmen, professional men, gentlemen, noblemen, and grand officials—who had been summoned from distant spots by artful lures to No. 54, and there battled with a crowd in vain only to find that there were hoaxed people who had thus lost both time and money—can be neither described nor imagined. It was not the idea of the hoax—simple enough in itself—which was en-

titled to the admiration accorded to ingenuity, but its extent and success, and the clever means taken by the conspirators to insure the attendance of every one who ought not to have been there. It was only late at night that the police succeeded in clearing the street, and the dupes retired, murmuring and vowing vengeance. Hook, however, gloried in the exploit, which he thought "perfect."

But the hoaxing dearest to Theodore—for there was something to be gained by it—was that by which he managed to obtain a dinner when either too hard-up to pay for one, or in the humor for a little amusement. No one who has not lived as a bachelor in London and been reduced—in respect of coin—to the sum of twopence-halfpenny, can tell how excellent a strop is hunger to sharpen wit upon. We all know that

"Mortals with stomachs can't live without dinner,"

and in Hook's day the substitute of "heavy teas" was not invented. Necessity is very soon brought to bed when a man puts his fingers into his pockets, finds them untenanted, and remembers that the only friend who would consent to lend him five shillings is gone out of town; and the infant, Invention, presently smiles into the nurse's face. But it was no uncommon thing in those days for gentlemen to invite themselves where they listed, and stay as long as they liked. It was only necessary for them to make themselves really agreeable, and deceive their host in some way or other.

Hook's friend, little Tom Hill, of whom it was said that he knew everybody's affairs far better than they did themselves, was famous for examining kitchens about the hour of dinner, and quietly selecting his host according to the odor of the viands. It is of him that the old "Joe Miller" is told of the "haunch of venison." Invited to dinner at one house, he *happens* to glance down into the kitchen of the next, and seeing a tempting haunch of venison on the spit, throws over the inviter, and ingratiates himself with his neighbor, who ends by asking him to stay to dinner. The fare, however, consisted of nothing more luxurious than an Irish stew, and the disappointed guest was informed that he had been "too cunning by half," inasmuch as the venison belonged to his original inviter, and had been cooked in the house he was in by kind permission, because the chimney of the owner's kitchen smoked.

The same principle often actuated Theodore; and, indeed, there are few stories which can be told of this characteristic of the great frolicker which have not been told a century of times.

For instance, two young men are strolling, towards 5 P. M., in the then fashionable neighborhood of Soho; the one is Terry, the actor—the other, Hook, the actor, for surely he deserves the title. They pass a house, and sniff the viands cooking underground. Hook quietly announces his intention of dining *there*. He enters, is admitted and announced by the servant, mingles with the company, and is quite at home

before he is perceived by the host. At last the *dénouement* came; the dinner-giver approached the stranger, and with great politeness asked his name. "Smith" was, of course, the reply, and reverting to mistakes made by servants in announcing, etc., "Smith" hurried off into an amusing story, to put his host in good humor. The conversation that followed is taken from "Ingoldsby:"—

"But, really, my dear sir," the host put in, "I think the mistake on the present occasion does not originate in the source you allude to; I certainly did not anticipate the honor of Mr. Smith's company to-day."

"No, I dare say not. You said *four* in your note, I know, and it is now, I see, a quarter past five; but the fact is, I have been detained in the City, as I was going to explain—"

"Pray," said the host, "whom do you suppose you are addressing?"

"Whom? why Mr. Thompson, of course—old friend of my father. I have not the pleasure, indeed, of being personally known to you, but having received your kind invitation yesterday," etc. etc.

"No, sir, my name is not Thompson, but Jones," in highly indignant accents.

"Jones!" was the well-acted answer: "why, surely, I cannot have—yes I must—good heaven! I see it all. My *dear* sir, what an unfortunate blunder: wrong house—what must you think of such an intrusion? I am really at a loss for words in which to apolo-

gize; you will permit me to retire at present, and to-morrow—"

"Pray, don't think of retiring," rejoined the host, taken with the appearance and manner of the young man. "Your friend's table must have been cleared long ago, if, as you say, four was the hour named, and I am too happy to be able to offer you a seat at mine."

It may be easily conceived that the invitation had not to be very often repeated, and Hook kept the risible muscles of the company upon the constant stretch, and paid for the entertainment in the only coin with which he was well supplied.

There was more wit, however, in his visit to a retired watchmaker, who had got from government a premium of £10,000 for the best chronometer. Hook was very partial to journeys in search of adventure; a gig, a lively companion, and sixpence for the first turnpike being generally all that was requisite; ingenuity supplied the rest. It was on one of these excursions, that Hook and his friend found themselves in the neighborhood of Uxbridge, with a horse and a gig, and not a sixpence to be found in any pocket. Now a horse and gig are property, but of what use is a valuable of which you cannot dispose or deposit at a pawnbroker's, while you are prevented proceeding on your way by that neat white gate with the neat white box of a house at its side? The only alternative left to the young men was to drive home again, dinnerless, a distance of twenty

miles, with a jaded horse, or to find gratuitous accommodation for man and beast. In such a case Sheridan would simply have driven to the first inn, and by persuasion or stratagem contrived to elude payment, after having drunk the best wine and eaten the best dinner the house could afford. Hook was really more refined, as well as bolder in his pillaging.

The villa of the retired tradesman was perceived, and the gig soon drew up before the door. The strangers were ushered in to the watchmaker, and Hook, with great politeness and a serious respectful look, addressed him. He said that he felt he was taking a great liberty—so he was—but that he could not pass the door of a man who had done the country so much service by the invention of what must prove the most useful and valuable instrument, without expressing to him the gratitude which he, as a British subject devoted to his country's good, could not but feel towards the inventor, etc. etc. The flattery was so delicately and so seriously insinuated, that the worthy citizen could only receive it as an honest expression of sincere admiration. The Rubicon was passed; a little lively conversation, artfully made attractive by Hook, followed, and the watchmaker was more and more gratified. He felt, too, what an honor it would be to entertain two real gentlemen, and, remarking that they were far from town, brought out at last the longed-for invitation, which was, of course, declined as out of the question. Thereupon the old gentleman became press-

ing: the young strangers were at last prevailed upon to accept it, and very full justice they did to the larder and cellar of the successful chronometer-maker.

There is nothing very original in the act of hoaxing, and Hook's way of getting a hackney-coach without paying for it was, perhaps, suggested by Sheridan's, but was more laughable. Finding himself in the vehicle, and knowing that there was nothing either in his purse or at home to pay the fare, he cast about for expedients, and at last remembered the address of an eminent surgeon in the neighborhood. He ordered the coachman to drive to his house and knock violently at the door, which was no sooner opened than Hook rushed in, terribly agitated, demanded to see the doctor, to whom in a few incoherent and agitated sentences he gave to understand that his wife needed his services immediately, being on the point of becoming a mother.

"I will start directly," replied the surgeon; "I will order my carriage at once."

"But, my dear sir, there is not a moment to spare. I have a coach at the door, jump into that."

The surgeon obeyed. The name and address given were those of a middle-aged spinster of the most rigid virtue. We can imagine her indignation, and how sharply she rung the bell, when the surgeon had delicately explained the object of his visit, and how eagerly he took refuge in the coach. Hook had, of course, walked quietly away in the mean time, and the Galenite had to pay the demand of Jehu.

The hoaxing stories of Theodore Hook are numberless. Hoaxing was the fashion of the day, and a childish fashion too. Charles Mathews, whose face possessed the flexibility of an acrobat's body, and who could assume any character or disguise on the shortest notice, was his great confederate in these plots. The banks of the Thames were their great resort. At one point there was Mathews talking gibberish in a disguise intended to represent the Spanish Ambassador, and actually deceiving the Woolwich authorities by his clever impersonation. At another, there was Hook landing uninvited with his friends upon the well-known, sleek-looking lawn of a testy little gentleman, drawing out a note-book and talking so authoritatively about the survey for a canal, to be undertaken by Government, that the owner of the lawn becomes frightened, and in his anxiety attempts to conciliate the mighty self-made official by the offer of dinner—of course accepted.

Then the *Arcades ambo* show off their jesting tricks at Croydon Fair, a most suitable place for them. On one occasion Hook personates a madman, accusing Mathews, "his brother," of keeping him out of his rights and in his custody. The whole fair collects around them, and begins to sympathize with Hook, who begs them to aid in his escape from his "brother." A sham escape and sham capture take place, and the party adjourn to the inn, where Mathews, who had been taken by surprise by the new part suddenly played by his confed-

erate, seized upon a hearse, which drew up before the inn, on its return from a funeral, persuaded the company to bind the "madman," who was now becoming furious, and who would have deposited him in the gloomy vehicle, if he had not succeeded in snapping his fetters, and so escaped. In short, they were two boys, with the sole difference, that they had sufficient talent and experience of the world to maintain admirably the parts they assumed.

But a far more famous and more admirable talent in Theodore than that of deception was that of improvising. The art of improvising belongs to Italy and the Tyrol. The wonderful gift of ready verse to express satire and ridicule, seems, as a rule, to be confined to the inhabitants of those two lands. Others are, indeed, scattered over the world, who possess this gift, but very sparsely. Theodore Hook stands almost alone in this country as an improviser. Yet to judge of such of his verses as have been preserved, taken down from memory or what not, the grand effect of them—and no doubt it *was* grand—must have been owing more to his manner and his acting, than to any intrinsic value in the verses themselves, which are, for the most part, slight, and devoid of actual wit, though abounding in puns. Sheridan's testimony to the wonderful powers of the man is, perhaps, more valuable than that of any one else, for he was a good judge both of verse and of wit. One of Hook's earliest displays of his talent was at a dinner given

by the Drury Lane actors to Sheridan at the Piazza Coffee House in 1808. Here, as usual, Hook sat down to the piano, and touching off a few chords, gave verse after verse on all the events of the entertainment, on each person present, though he now saw many of them for the first time, and on anything connected with the matters of interest before them. Sheridan was delighted, and declared that he could not have believed such a faculty possible if he had not witnessed its effects: that no description "could have convinced him of so peculiar an instance of genius," and so forth.

One of his most extraordinary efforts in this line is related by Mr. Jerdan. A dinner was given by Mansell Reynolds to Lockhart, Luttrell, Coleridge, Hook, Tom Hill, and others. The grown-up schoolboys, pretty far gone in Falernian, of a home-made, and very homely vintage, amused themselves by breaking the wine-glasses, till Coleridge was set to demolish the last of them with a fork thrown at it from the side of the table. Let it not be supposed that any teetotal spirit suggested this iconoclasm; far from it—the glasses were too small, and the poets, the wits, the punsters, the jesters, preferred to drink their port out of tumblers. After dinner Hook gave one of his songs which satirized successively, and successfully, each person present. He was then challenged to improvise on any given subject, and by way of one as far distant from poetry as could be, *cocoanut oil* was

fixed upon. Theodore accepted the challenge; and after a moment's consideration, began his lay with a description of the Mauritius, which he knew so well, the negroes dancing round the cocoanut tree, the process of extracting the oil, and so forth, all in excellent rhyme and rhythm, if not actual poetry. Then came the voyage to England, hits at the Italian warehousemen, and so on, till the oil is brought into the very lamp before them in that very room, to show them with the light it feeds and make them able to break wine-glasses and get drunk from tumblers. This we may be sure Hook himself did, for one, and the rest were probably not much behind him.

In late life this gift of Hook's—improvising, I mean, not getting intoxicated—was his highest recommendation in society, and at the same time his bane. Like Sheridan, he was ruined by his wonderful natural powers. It can well be imagined that to improvise in the manner in which Hook did it, and at a moment's notice, required some effort of the intellect. This effort became greater as circumstances depressed his spirits more and more, and yet with every care upon his mind he was expected, wherever he went, to amuse the guests with a display of his talent. He could not do so without stimulants, and rather than give up society, fell into habits of drinking, which hastened his death.

We have thrown together the foregoing anecdotes of Hook, irrespective of time, in order to show what the man's gifts were, and what his title to be considered a

wit. We must proceed more steadily to a review of his life. Successful as Hook had proved as a writer for the stage, he suddenly and without any sufficient cause rushed off into another branch of literature, that of novel-writing. His first attempt in this kind of fiction was "The Man of Sorrow," published under the *nom de plume* of *Alfred Allendale*. This was not, as its name would seem to imply, a novel of pathetic cast, but the history of a gentleman whose life from beginning to end is rendered wretched by a succession of mishaps of the most ludicrous but improbable kind. Indeed Theodore's novels, like his stage-pieces, are gone out of date in an age so practical that even in romance it will not allow of the slightest departure from reality. Their very style was ephemeral, and their interest could not outlast the generation to amuse which they were penned. This first novel was written when Hook was one-and-twenty. Soon after he was sent to Oxford, where he had been entered at St. Mary's Hall, more affectionately known by the nickname of "Skimmery." No selection could have been worse. Skimmery was, at that day, and until quite recently, a den of thieves, where young men of fortune and folly submitted to be pillaged in return for being allowed perfect license, as much to eat as they could possibly swallow, and far more to drink than was at all good for them. It has required all the enterprise of the present excellent Principal to convert it into a place of sober study.

It was then the most "gentlemanly" residence in Oxford; for a gentleman in those days meant a man who did nothing, spent his own or his father's guineas with a brilliant indifference to consequences, and who applied his mind solely to the art of frolic. It was the very place where Hook would be encouraged instead of restrained in his natural propensities, and had he remained there he would probably have ruined himself and his father long before he had put on the sleeves.

At the matriculation itself he gave a specimen of his "fun." When asked, according to the usual form, "if he was willing to sign the Thirty-nine Articles," he replied, "Certainly, sir, *forty* if you please." The gravity of the stern Vice-Chancellor was upset, but as no Oxford Don can ever pardon a joke, however good, Master Theodore was very nearly being dismissed, had not his brother, by this time a Prebendary of Winchester, and "an honor to his college, sir," interceded in his favor.

The night before, he had given a still better specimen of his affrontery. He had picked up a number of old Harrovians, with whom he had repaired to a tavern for song, supper, and sociability, and as usual in such cases, in the lap of Alma Mater, the babes became sufficiently intoxicated, and not a little uproarious. Drinking in a tavern is forbidden by Oxonian statutes, and one of the proctors happening to pass in the street outside, was attracted into the house by the

sound of somewhat unscholastic merriment. The effect can be imagined. All the youths were in absolute terror, except Theodore, and looked in vain for some way to escape. The wary and faithful "bull-dogs" guarded the doorway; the marshal, predecessor of the modern omniscient Brown, advanced respectfully behind the proctor into the room, and passing a penetrating glance from one youth to the other, all of whom—except Theodore again—he knew by sight—for that is the pride and pleasure of a marshal—mentally registered their names in secret hopes of getting half-a-crown apiece to forget them again.

No mortal is more respectful in his manner of accosting you than an Oxford proctor, for he may make a mistake, and a mistake may make him very miserable. When, for instance, a highly respectable lady was the other day lodged, in spite of protestations, in the "Procuratorial Rooms," and there locked up on suspicion of being somebody very different, the overzealous proctor who had ordered her incarceration was sued for damages for £300, and had to pay them too! Therefore the gentleman in question most graciously and suavely inquired of Mr. Theodore Hook—

"I beg your pardon, sir, but are you a member of this university?"—the usual form.

"No, sir, I am not. Are you?"

The suavity at once changed to grave dignity. The proctor lifted up the hem of his garment, which being of broad velvet, with the selvage on it, was one of

the insignia of his office, and sternly said,—"You see this, sir."

"Ah!" said Hook, cool as ever, and quietly feeling the material, which he examined with apparent interest, "I see; Manchester velvet: and may I take the liberty, sir, of inquiring how much you have paid per yard for the article?"

A roar of laughter from all present burst forth with such vehemence that it shot the poor official, red with suppressed anger, into the street again, and the merrymakers continued their bout till the approach of midnight, when they were obliged to return to their respective colleges.

Had Theodore proceeded in this way for several terms, no doubt the outraged authorities would have added his name to the list of the great men whom they have expelled from time to time most unprophetically. As it was, he soon left the groves of Academus, and sought those of Fashion in town. His matriculation into this new university was much more auspicious; he was hailed in society as already fit to take a degree of bachelor of his particular arts, and ere long his improvising, his fun, his mirth—as yet natural and overboiling—his wicked punning, and his tender wickedness, induced the same institution to offer him the grade of "Master" of those arts. In after years he rose to be even "Doctor," and many, perhaps, were the minds diseased to which his well-known mirth ministered.

It was during this period that some of his talents were displayed in the manner we have described, though his great fame as an improvisatore was established more completely in later days. Yet he had already made himself a name in that species of wit—not a very high one—which found favor with the society at that period. We allude to imitation, "taking off," and punning. The last contemptible branch of wit-making, now happily confined to "Punch," is as old as variety of language. It is not possible with simple vocabularies, and accordingly is seldom met with in purely-derived languages. Yet we have Roman and Greek puns; and English is peculiarly adapted to this childish exercise, because, being made up of several languages, it necessarily contains many words which are like in sound and unlike in meaning. Punning is, in fact, the vice of English wit, the temptation of English mirth-makers, and, at last, we trust, the scorn of English good sense. But in Theodore's days it held a high place, and men who had no real wit about them could twist and turn words and combinations of words with great ingenuity and much readiness, to the delight of their listeners. Pun-making was a fashion among the conversationists of that day, and took the place of better wit. Hook was a disgraceful punster, and a successful one. He strung puns together by the score—nothing more easy—in his improvised songs and conversation. Take an instance from his quiz on the march of intellect:—

"Hackney-coachmen from *Swift* shall reply, if you feel
Annoyed at being needlessly shaken;
And butchers, of course, be flippant from *Steele*,
And pig-drivers well versed in *Bacon*.
From *Locke* shall the blacksmiths authority brave,
And gas-men cite *Coke* at discretion;
Undertakers talk *Gay* as they go to the *grave*,
And waterman *Rowe* by profession."

I have known a party of naturally stupid people produce a whole century of puns one after another, on any subject that presented itself, and I am inclined to think that nothing can, at the same time, be more nauseous or more destructive to real wit. Yet Theodore's strength lay in puns, and when shorn of them, the Philistines might well laugh at his want of strength. Surely his title to wit does not lie in that direction.

However, he amused, and that gratis; and an amusing man makes his way anywhere if he have only sufficient tact not to abuse his privileges. Hook grew great in London society for a time, and might have grown greater if a change had not come.

He had supported himself, up to 1812, almost entirely by his pen: and the goose-quill is rarely a staff, though it may sometimes be a walking-stick. It was clear that he needed—what so many of us need and cannot get—a certainty. Happy fellow! he might have begged for an appointment for years in vain, as many another does, but it fell into his lap, no one knows how, and at four-and-twenty Mr. Theodore Edward Hook was

made treasurer to the Island of Mauritius, with a salary of £2000 per annum. This was not to be, and was not, despised. In spite of climate, mosquitoes, and so forth, Hook took the money and sailed.

We have no intention of entering minutely upon his conduct in this office, which has nothing to do with his character as a wit. There are a thousand and one reasons for believing him guilty of the charges brought against him, and a thousand and one for supposing him guiltless. Here was a young man, gay, jovial, given to society entirely, and not at all to arithmetic, put into a very trying and awkward position—native clerks who would cheat if they could, English governors who would find fault if they could, a disturbed treasury, an awkward currency, liars for witnesses, and undeniable evidence of defalcation. In a word, an examination was made into the state of the treasury of the island, and a large deficit found. It remained to trace it home to its original author.

Hook had not acquired the best character in the island. Those who know the official dignity of a small British colony can well understand how his pleasantries must have shocked those worthy big wigs who, exalted from Pump Court, Temple, or Paradise Row, Old Brompton, to places of honor and high salaries, rode their high horses with twice the exclusiveness of those "to the manner born." For instance, Hook was once, by a mere chance, obliged to take the chair at an official dinner, on which occasion the toasts pro-

posed by the chairman were to be accompanied by a salute from guns without. Hook went through the list, and seemed to enjoy toast-drinking so much that he was quite sorry to have come to the end of it, and continued, as if still from the list, to propose successively the health of each officer present. The gunners were growing quite weary, but having their orders, dared not complain. Hook was delighted, and went on to the amazement and amusement of all who were not tired of the noise, each youthful sub, taken by surprise, being quite gratified at the honor done him. At last there was no one to toast; but the wine had taken effect, and Hook, amid roars of laughter inside, and roars of savage artillery without, proposed the health of the waiter who had so ably officiated. This done, he bethought him of the cook, who was sent for to return thanks; but the artillery officer had by this time got wind of the affair, and feeling that more than enough powder had been wasted on the health of gentlemen who were determined to destroy it by the number of their potations, took on himself the responsibility of ordering the gunners to stop.

On another occasion he incurred the displeasure of the governor, General Hall, by fighting a duel—fortunately as harmless as that of Moore and Jeffrey—

> "When Little's leadless pistol met his eye,
> And Bow-street myrmidons stood laughing by,"

as Byron says. The governor was sensible enough to

wish to put down the "Gothic appeal to arms," and was therefore the more irate.

These circumstances must be taken into consideration in Hook's favor in examining the charge of embezzlement. It must also be stated that the information of the deficit was sent in a letter to the governor by a man named Allan, chief clerk in the Treasury, who had, for irregular conduct, been already threatened with dismissal. Allan had admitted that he had known of the deficit for fifteen months, and yet he had not, till he was himself in trouble, thought of making it known to the proper authorities. Before his examination, which of course followed, could be concluded, Allan committed suicide. Now, does it not, on the face of it, seem of the highest probability that this man was the real delinquent, and that knowing that Hook had all the responsibility, and having taken fair precautions against his own detection, he had anticipated a discovery of the affair by a revelation, incriminating the treasurer? *Quien sabe?*—dead men tell no tales.

The chest, however, was examined, and the deficit found far greater yet than had been reported. Hook could not explain, could not understand it at all; but if not criminal, he had necessarily been careless. He was arrested, thrown into prison, and by the first vessel despatched to England to take his trial, his property of every kind having been sold for the Government. Hook, in utter destitution, might be supposed to have lost his usual spirits, but he could not resist a joke.

At St. Helena he met an old friend going out to the Cape, who, surprised at seeing him on his return voyage after a residence of only five years, said: "I hope you are not going home for your health."—"Why," said Theodore, "I am sorry to say that they think there is something wrong in the *chest*." "Something wrong in the chest" became henceforward the ordinary phrase in London society in referring to Hook's scrape.

Arrived in England, he was set free, the Government here having decided that he could not be criminally tried; and thus Hook, guilty or not, had been ruined and disgraced for life for simple carelessness. True, the custody of a nation's property makes negligence almost criminal; but that does not excuse the punishment of a man before he is tried.

He was summoned, however, to the Colonial Audit Board, where he underwent a trying examination; after which he was declared to be in the debt of Government: a writ of extent was issued against him; nine months were passed in that delightful place of residence, a Sponging-house, which he then exchanged for the "Rules of the Bench"—the only rules which have no exception. From these he was at last liberated, in 1825, on the understanding that he was to repay the money to Government if at any time he should be in a position to do so.

His liberation was a tacit acknowledgment of his innocence of the charge of robbery; his encumberment with a debt caused by another's delinquencies

was, we presume, a signification of his responsibility and some kind of punishment for his carelessness. Certainly it was hard upon Hook that, if innocent, he should not have gone forth without a stain on his character for honesty; and it was unjust that, if guilty, he should not have been punished. The judgment was one of those compromises with stern justice which are seldom satisfactory to either party.

The fact was that, guilty or not guilty, Hook had been both incompetent and inconsiderate. Doubtless he congratulated himself highly on receiving, at the age of twenty-five, an appointment worth £2000 a year in the paradise of the world; but how short-sighted his satisfaction, since this very appointment left him some ten years later a pauper to begin life anew with an indelible stain on his character. It was absurd to give so young a man such a post; but it was absolutely wrong in Hook not to do his utmost to carry out his duties properly. Nay, he had trifled with the public money, in the same liberal—perhaps a *more* liberal—spirit as if it had been his own—made advances and loans here and there injudiciously, and taken little heed of the consequences. Probably, at this day, the common opinion acquits Hook of a designed and complicated fraud; but common opinion never did acquit him of misconduct, and even by his friends this affair was looked upon with a suspicion that preferred silence to examination.

But why take such pains to exonerate Hook from a

charge of robbery, when he was avowedly guilty of as bad a sin, of which the law took no cognizance, and which society forgave far more easily than it could have done for robbing the State? Soon after his return from the Mauritius, he took lodgings in the cheap, but unfashionable neighborhood of Somers Town. Here, in the moment of his misfortune, when doubting whether disgrace, imprisonment, or what not awaited him, he sought solace in the affection of a young woman, of a class certainly much beneath his, and of a character unfit to make her a valuable companion to him. Hook had received little moral training, and had he done so, his impulses were sufficiently strong to overcome any amount of principle. With this person—to use the modern slang which seems to convert a glaring sin into a social misdemeanor—"he formed a connection." In other words, he destroyed her virtue. Hateful as such an act is, we must, before we can condemn a man for it without any recommendation to mercy, consider a score of circumstances which have rendered the temptation stronger, and the result almost involuntary. Hook was not a man of high moral character—very far from it—but we need not therefore suppose that he sat down coolly and deliberately, like a villain in a novel, to effect the girl's ruin. But the Rubicon once passed, how difficult is the retreat! There are but two paths open to a man who would avoid living a life of sin: the one, to marry his victim; the other, to break off the connection before it is too late. The first is, of

course, the more proper course; but there are cases where marriage is impossible. From the latter a man of any heart must shrink with horror. Yet there *are* cases, even, where the one sin will prove the least—where she who has loved too well may grieve bitterly at parting, yet will be no more open to temptation than if she had never fallen. Such cases are rare, and it is not probable that the young person with whom Hook had become connected would have retrieved the fatal error. She became a mother, and there was no retreat. It is clear that Hook ought to have married her. It is evident that he was selfish and wrong not to do so;—yet he shrank from it, weakly, wickedly, and he was punished for his shrinking. He had sufficient feeling not to throw his victim over, yet he was content to live a life of sin, and to keep her in such a life. This is perhaps the blackest stain on Hook's character. When Fox married, in consequence of a similar connection, he "settled down," retrieved his early errors, and became a better man, morally, than he had ever been. Hook *ought* to have married. It was the cowardly dread of public opinion that deterred him from doing so, and, in consequence he was never happy, and felt that this connection was a perpetual burden to him.

Wrecked and ruined, Hook had no resource but his literary talents, and it is to be deplored that he should have prostituted these to serve an ungentlemanly and dishonorable party in their onslaught upon an unfor-

tunate woman. Whatever may be now thought of the queen of "the greatest gentleman"—or *roué*—of Europe, those who hunted her down will never be pardoned, and Hook was one of those. We have cried out against an Austrian general for condemning a Hungarian lady to the lash, and we have seen, with delight, a mob chase him through the streets of London and threaten his very life. But we have not only pardoned, but even praised, our favorite wit for far worse conduct than this. Even if we allow, which we do not, that the queen was one half as bad as her enemies, or rather her husband's parasites, would make her out, we cannot forgive the men who, shielded by their incognito, and perfectly free from danger of any kind, set upon a woman with libels, invectives, ballads, epigrams, and lampoons, which a lady could scarcely read, and of which a royal lady, and many an English gentlewoman, too, were the butts.

The vilest of all the vile papers of that day was the "John Bull," now settled down to a quiet periodical. Perhaps the real John Bull, heavy, good-natured lumberer as he is, was never worse represented than in this journal which bore his name, but had little of his kindly spirit. Hook was its originator, and for a long time its main supporter. Scurrility, scandal, libel, baseness of all kinds formed the fuel with which it blazed, and the wit, bitter, unflinching, unsparing, which puffed the flame up, was its chief recommendation.

No more disgraceful climax was ever reached by a disgraceful dynasty of profligates than that which found a king of England—long, as Regent, the leader of the profligate and degraded—at war with his injured Queen. None have deserved better the honest gratitude of their country than those who, like Henry Brougham, defended the oppressed woman in spite of opposition, obloquy, and ridicule.

But we need not go deeply into a history so fresh in the minds of all, as that blot which shows John Bull himself upholding a wretched dissipated monarch against a wife, who, whatever her faults, was still a woman, and whatever her spirit—for she had much of it, and showed it grandly at need—was still a lady. Suffice it to say that "John Bull" was the most violent of the periodicals that attacked her, and that Theodore Hook, no Puritan himself, was the principal writer in that paper.

If you can imagine "Punch" turned Conservative, incorporated in one paper with the "Morning Herald," so that a column of news was printed side by side with one of a jocular character, and these two together devoted without principle to the support of a party, the attack of Whiggism, and an unblushing detraction of the character of one of our princesses, you can form some idea of what "John Bull" was in those days. There is, however, a difference: "Punch" attacks public characters, and ridicules public events; "John Bull" dragged out the most retired from their privacy, and attacked

them with calumnies for which, often, there was no foundation. Then, again, "Punch" is not nearly so bitter as was "John Bull:" there is not in the "London Charivari" a determination to say everything that spite can invent against any particular set or party; there is a good nature, still, in master "Punch." It was quite the reverse in "John Bull," established for one purpose, and devoted to that. Yet the wit in Theodore's paper does not rise much higher than that of our modern laughing philosopher.

Of Hook's contributions the most remarkable was the "Ramsbottom Letters," in which Mrs. Lavinia Dorothea Ramsbottom describes all the *memory billions* of her various tours at home and abroad, always, of course, with more or less allusion to political affairs. The "fun" of these letters is very inferior to that of "Jeames" or of the "Snob Papers," and consists more in Malaprop absurdities and a wide range of bad puns, than in any real wit displayed in them. Of the style of both, we take an extract anywhere:—

"Oh! Mr. Bull, Room is raley a beautiful place. We entered it by the Point of Molly, which is just like the Point and Sally at Porchmouth, only they call Sally there Port, which is not known in Room. The Tiber is a nice river, it looks yellow, but it does the same there as the Thames does here. We hired a carry-lettz and a cocky-olly, to take us to the Church of Salt Peter, which is prodigious big; in the centre of the pizarro there is a basilisk very high, on the right

and left two handsome foundlings; and the farcy, as Mr. Fulmer called it, is ornamented with collateral statutes of some of the Apostates."

We can quite imagine that Hook wrote many of these letters when excited by wine. Some are laughable enough, but the majority are so deplorably stupid, reeking with puns and scurrility, that when the temporary interest was gone, there was nothing left to attract the reader. It is scarcely possible to laugh at the Joe-Millerish mistakes, the old world puns, and the trite stories of Hook "remains." Remains! indeed; they had better have remained where they were.

Besides prose of this kind, Hook contributed various jingles—there is no other name for them—arranged to popular tunes, and intended to become favorites with the country people. These like the prose effusions served the purpose of an hour, and have no interest now. Whether they were ever really popular remains to be proved. Certes, they are forgotten now, and long since even in the most Conservative corners of the country. Many of these have the appearance of having been originally *recitati*, and their amusement must have depended chiefly on the face and manner of the singer—Hook himself; but in some he displayed that vice of rhyming which has often made nonsense go down, and which is tolerable only when introduced in the satire of a "Don Juan" or the first-rate mimicry of "Rejected Addresses." Hook had a most wonderful facility in concocting out-of-the-way

rhymes, and a few verses from his song on Clubs will suffice for a good specimen of his talent:—

"If any man loves comfort, and has little cash to buy it, he
Should get into a crowded club—a most select society;
While solitude and mutton-cutlets serve *infelix uxor*, he
May have his club (like Hercules), and revel there in luxury.
Bow, wow, wow, etc.

"Yes, clubs knock houses on the head; e'en Hatchett's can't demolish them;
Joy grieves to see their magnitude, and Long longs to abolish them.
The inns are out; hotels for single men scarce keep alive on it;
While none but houses that are in the family way thrive on it.
Bow, wow, wow, etc.

"There's first the Athenæum Club, so wise, there's not a man of it
That has not sense enough for six (in fact, that is the plan of it);
The very waiters answer you with eloquence Socratical;
And always place the knives and forks in order mathematical.
Bow, wow, wow, etc.

* * * * *

"E'en Isis has a house in town, and Cam abandons her city.
The master now hangs out at the Trinity University.

* * * * *

"The Union Club is quite superb; its best apartment daily is
The lounge of lawyers, doctors, merchants, beaux, *cum multis aliis*.

* * * * *

"The Travellers are in Pall Mall, and smoke cigars so cozily,
And dream they climb the highest Alps, or rove the plains of Moselai.

* * * * *

"These are the stages which all men propose to play their parts upon,
For *clubs* are what the Londoners have clearly set their *hearts* upon.
Bow, wow, wow, tiddy-iddy-iddy-iddy, bow, wow, wow," etc.

This is one of the harmless ballads of "Bull." Some of the political ones are scarcely fit to print in the present day. We cannot wonder that ladies of a certain position gave out that they would not receive any one who took in this paper. It was scurrilous to the last degree, and Theodore Hook was the soul of it. He preserved his incognito so well, that in spite of all attempts to unearth him, it was many years before he could be certainly fixed upon as a writer in its columns. He even went to the length of writing letters and articles against himself, in order to disarm suspicion.

Hook now lived and thrived purely on literature. He published many novels—gone where the bad novels go, and unread in the present day, unless in some remote country town, which boasts only a very meagre circulating library. Improbability took the place of natural painting in them; punning supplied that of better wit; and personal portraiture was so freely used, that his most intimate friends—old Mathews, for instance—did not escape.

Meanwhile Hook, making a good fortune, returned to his convivial life, and the enjoyment—if enjoyment it be—of general society. He "threw out his bow

window" on the strength of his success with "John Bull," and spent much more than he had. He mingled freely in all the London circles of thirty years ago, whose glory is still fresh in the minds of most of us, and everywhere his talent as an improvisatore, and his conversational powers, made him a general favorite.

Unhappy popularity for Hook! He, who was yet deeply in debt to the nation—who had an illegitimate family to maintain, who owed in many quarters more than he could ever hope to pay—was still fool enough to entertain largely, and receive both nobles and wits in the handsomest manner. Why did he not live quietly? why not, like Fox, marry the unhappy woman whom he had made the mother of his children, and content himself with trimming vines and rearing tulips? Why, forsooth? because he was Theodore Hook, thoughtless and foolish to the last. The jester of the people must needs be a fool. Let him take it to his conscience that he was not as much a knave.

In his later years Hook took to the two dissipations most likely to bring him into misery—play and drink. He was utterly unfitted for the former, being too gay a spirit to sit down and calculate chances. He lost considerably, and the more he lost the more he played. Drinking became almost a necessity with him. He had a reputation to keep up in society, and had not the moral courage to retire from it altogether. Writ-

ing, improvising, conviviality, play, demanded stimulants. His mind was overworked in every sense. He had recourse to the only remedy, and in drinking he found a temporary relief from anxiety, and a short-lived sustenance. There is no doubt that this man, who had amused London circles for many years, hastened his end by drinking.

It is not yet thirty years since Theodore Hook died. He left the world on August the 24th, 1841, and by this time he remains in the memory of men only as a wit that was, a punster, a hoaxer, a sorry jester, with an ample fund of fun, but not as a great man in any way. Allowing everything for his education—the times he lived in, and the unhappy error of his early life—we may admit that Hook was not, in character, the worst of the wits. He died in no odor of sanctity, but he was not a blasphemer or reviler, like others of this class. He ignored the bond of matrimony, yet he remained faithful to the woman he had betrayed; he was undoubtedly careless in the one responsible office with which he was intrusted, yet he cannot be taxed, taking all in all, with deliberate peculation. His drinking and playing were bad—very bad. His improper connection was bad—very bad; but perhaps the worst feature in his career was his connection with "John Bull," and his ready giving in to a system of low libel. There is no excuse for this but the necessity of living; but Hook, had he retained any principle, might have made enough to live upon in a more

honest manner. His name does, certainly, not stand out well among the wits of this country, but after all, since all were so bad, Hook may be excused as not being the worst of them. *Requiescat in pace.*

Rev. Sydney Smith.

SYDNEY SMITH.

Smith's reputation—to quote from Lord Cockburn's "Memorial of Edinburgh"—"here, then, was the same as it has been throughout his life, that of a wise wit." A wit he was, but we must deny him the reputation of being a beau. For that, nature, no less than his holy office, had disqualified him. Who that ever beheld him in a London drawing-room, when he went to so many dinners that he used to say that he was a walking patty—who could ever miscall him a beau? How few years have we numbered since one perceived the large bulky form in canonical attire—the plain heavy face, large, long, unredeemed by any expression, except that of sound hard sense—and thought, "can this be the Wit?" How few years is it since Henry Cockburn, hating London, and coming but rarely to what he called the "devil's drawing-room," stood near him, yet apart, for he was the most diffident of men; his wonderful luminous eyes, his clear, almost youthful, vivid complexion, contrasting brightly with the gray, pallid, prebendal complexion of Sydney? how short a time since Francis Jeffrey, the smallest of great men, a beau in his old age, a wit to the last, stood hat in hand to bandy words with

Sydney ere he rushed off to some still gayer scene, some more fashionable circle: yet they are all gone—gone from sight, living in memory alone.

Perhaps it was time: they might have lived, indeed, a few short years longer; we might have heard their names amongst us; listened to their voices; gazed upon the deep hazel, ever sparkling eyes, that constituted the charm of Cockburn's handsome face, and made all other faces seem tame and dead: we might have marvelled at the ingenuity, the happy turns of expression, the polite sarcasm of Jeffrey; we might have revelled in Sydney Smith's immense natural gift of fun, and listened to the "wise wit," regretting with Lord Cockburn, that so much worldly wisdom seemed almost inappropriate in one who should have been in some freer sphere than within the pale of holy orders: we might have done this, but the picture might have been otherwise. Cockburn, whose intellect rose, and became almost sublime, as his spirit neared death, might have sunk into the depression of conscious weakness; Jeffrey might have repeated himself, or turned hypochondriacal: Sydney Smith have grown garrulous: let us not grieve; they went in their prime of intellect, before one quality of mind had been touched by the frostbite of age.

Sydney Smith's life is a chronicle of literary society. He was born in 1771, and he died in 1845. What a succession of great men does that period comprise! Scott, Jeffrey, Mackintosh, Dugald Stewart, Horner,

Brougham, and Cockburn were his familiars—a constellation which has set, we fear, for ever. Our world presents nothing like it: we must look back, not around us, for strong minds, cultivated up to the nicest point. Our age is too diffused, too practical for us to hope to witness again so grand a spectacle.

From his progenitors Sydney Smith inherited one of his best gifts, great animal spirits—the only spirits one wants in this racking life of ours; and his were transmitted to him by his father. That father, Mr. Robert Smith, was odd as well as clever. His oddities seem to have been coupled with folly; but that of Sydney was soberized by thought, and swayed by intense common sense. The father had a mania for buying and altering places: one need hardly say that he spoiled them. Having done so, he generally sold them; and *nineteen* various places were thus the source of expense to him, and of injury to the pecuniary interests of his family.

This strange spendthrift married a Miss Olier, a daughter of a French emigrant, from Languedoc. Every one may remember the charming attributes given by Miss Kavanagh, in her delicious tale, "Nathalie," to the French women of the South. This Miss Olier seems to have realized all one's ideas of the handsome, sweet-tempered, high-minded Southrons of *la belle France*. To her Sydney Smith traced his native gayety; her beauty did not, certainly, pass to him as well as to some of her other descendants.

When Talleyrand was living in England as an emigrant, on intimate terms with Robert Smith, Sydney's brother, or Bobus, as he was called by his intimates, the conversation turned one day on hereditary beauty. Bobus spoke of his mother's personal perfections: "*Ah, mon ami*," cried Talleyrand, "*c'était apparemment, monsieur: votre père qui n'était pas bien.*"

This Bobus was the schoolfellow at Eton of Canning and Frere; and with John Smith and those two youths, wrote the "Microcosm." Sydney, on the other hand, was placed on the Foundation, at Winchester, which was then a stern place of instruction for a gay, spirited, hungry boy. Courtenay, his younger brother, went with him, but ran away twice. To owe one's education to charity was, in those days, to be half-starved. Never was there enough, even of the coarsest food, to satisfy the boys, and the urchins, fresh from home, were left to fare as they might. "Neglect, abuse, and vice were," Sydney used to say, "the pervading evils of Winchester; and the system of teaching, if one may so call it, savored of the old monastic narrowness. . . . I believe, when a boy at school, I made above ten thousand Latin verses, and no man in his senses would dream of ever making another in after-life. So much for life and time wasted." The verse-inciting process is, nevertheless, remorselessly carried on during three years more at Oxford, and is much oftener the test of patient stupidity than of aspiring talent. Yet of what stupendous importance it is in the attainment of scholar-

ships and prizes! and how zealous, how tenacious, are dons and "coaches" in holding to that which far higher classics, the Germans, regard with contempt!

Sydney's proficiency promoted him to be captain of the school, and he left Winchester for New College, Oxford—one of the noblest and most abused institutions then of that grand universsity. Having obtained a scholarship, as a matter of course, and afterwards a fellowship, he remarked that the usual bumpers of port wine at college were as much the order of the day among the Fellows as Latin verses among the undergraduates. We may not, however, picture to ourselves Sydney as partaking of the festivities of the common room; with more probability let us imagine him wandering with steady gait, even *after* Hall—a thing not even then or now certain in colleges—in those evergreen, leafy, varied gardens, flanked by that old St. Peter's church on the one side, and guarded by the high wall, once a fortification, on the other. He was poor, and therefore safe, for poverty is a guardian angel to an undergraduate, and work may protect even the Fellow from utter deterioration.

He was turned out into the world by his father with his hundred a year from the Fellowship, and never had a farthing from the old destroyer of country-seats afterwards. He never owed a sixpence; nay, he paid a debt of thirty pounds, which Courtenay, who had no *iron* in his character, had incurred at Winchester, and had not the courage to avow. The next step was to

choose a profession. The bar would have been Sydney's choice; but the church was the choice of his father. It is the cheapest channel by which a man may pass into genteel poverty; "wit and independence do not make bishops," as Lord Cockburn remarks. We do not, however, regard, as he does, Sydney Smith as "lost" by being a churchman. He was happy, and made others happy; he was good, and made others good. Who can say the same of a successful barrister or of a popular orator? His first sphere was in a curacy on Salisbury Plain; one of his earliest clerical duties was to marry his brother Robert (a barrister) to Miss Vernon, aunt to Lord Lansdowne. "All I can tell you of the marriage," Sydney wrote to his mother, "is that he cried, she cried, I cried." It was celebrated in the library at Bowood, where Sydney so often enchanted the captivating circle afterwards by his wit.

Nothing could be more gloomy than the young pastor's life on Salisbury Plain: "the first and poorest pauper of the hamlet," as he calls a curate, he was seated down among a few scattered cottages on this vast flat; visited even by the butcher's cart only once a week from Salisbury; accosted by a few human beings; shunned by all who loved social life. But the probation was not long; and after being nearly destroyed by a thunder-storm in one of his rambles, he quitted Salisbury Plain, after two years, for a more genial scene.

There was an hospitable squire, a Mr. Beach, living

in Smith's parish; the village of Netherhaven, near Amesbury. Mr. Beach had a son; the quiet Sundays at the Hall were enlivened by the curate's company at dinner, and Mr. Beach found his guest both amusing and sensible, and begged him to become tutor to the young squire. Smith accepted; and went away with his pupil, intending to visit Germany. The French Revolution was, however, at its height. Germany was impracticable, and "we were driven," Sydney wrote to his mother, "by stress of politics, into Edinburgh."

This accident,—this seeming accident,—was the foundation of Sydney Smith's opportunities; not of his success, for that his own merits procured, but of the direction to which his efforts were applied. He would have been eminent, wherever destiny had led him; but he was thus made to be useful in one especial manner; "his lines had, indeed, fallen in pleasant places."

Edinburgh, in 1797, was not, it is almost needless to say, the Edinburgh of 1860. An ancient, picturesque, high-built looking city, with its wynds and closes, it had far more the characteristics of an old French *ville de province* than of a northern capital. The foundation-stone of the new College was laid in 1789, but the building was not finished until more than forty years afterwards. The edifice then stood in the midst of fields and gardens. "Often," writes Lord Cockburn, "did we stand to admire the blue and yellow

crocuses rising through the clean earth in the first days of spring, in the house of Doctor Monro (the second), whose house stood in a small field entering from Nicolson Street, within less than a hundred yards from the college."

The New Town was in progress when Sydney Smith and his pupil took refuge in "Auld Reekie." With the rise of every street some fresh innovation in manners seemed also to begin. Lord Cockburn, wedded as he was to his beloved Reekie, yet unprejudiced and candid on all points, ascribes the change in customs to the intercourse with the English, and seems to date it from the Union. Thus the overflowing of the old town into fresh spaces "implied," as he remarks, "a general alteration of our habits."

As the dwellers in the Faubourg St. Germain regard their neighbors across the Seine, in the Faubourg St. Honoré, with disapproving eyes, so the sojourners in the Canongate and the Cowgate considered that the inundation of modern population vulgarized their "prescriptive gentilities." Cockburn's description of a Scottish assembly in the olden time is most interesting.

"For example, Saint Cecilia's Hall was the only public resort of the musical; and besides being our most selectly fashionable place of amusement, was the best and most beautiful concert-room I have ever seen. And there have I myself seen most of our literary and fashionable gentlemen, predominating with their side curls and

frills, and ruffles, and silver buckles; and our stately matrons stiffened in hoops, and gorgeous satin; and our beauties with high-heeled shoes, powdered and pomatumed hair, and lofty and composite head-dresses. All this was in the Cowgate, the last retreat now-a-days of destitution and disease. The building still stands, though raised and changed. When I last saw it, it seemed to be partly an old-clothesman's shop and partly a brazier's." Balls were held in the beautiful rooms of George Square, in spite of the "New Town piece of presumption," that is, an attempt to force the fashionable dancers of the reel into the George Street apartments.

"And here," writes Lord Cockburn, looking back to the days when he was that "ne'er-do-weel" Harry Cockburn, "were the last remains of the ball-room discipline of the preceding age. Martinet dowagers and venerable beaux acted as masters and mistresses of ceremonies, and made all the preliminary arrangements. No couple could dance unless each party was provided with a ticket prescribing the precise place, in the precise dance. If there was no ticket, the gentleman or the lady was dealt with as an intruder, and turned out of the dance. If the ticket had marked upon it—say for a country-dance, the figures, 3, 5; this meant that the holder was to place himself in the 3d dance, and 5th from the top; and if he was anywhere else, he was set right or excluded. And the partner's ticket must correspond. Woe on the poor girl who with ticket 2,

7, was found opposite a youth marked 5, 9! It was flirting without a license, and looked very ill, and would probably be reported by the ticket-director of that dance to the mother."

All this had passed away; and thus the aristocracy of a few individuals was ended; and society, freed from some of its restraints, flourished in another and more enlightened way than formerly.

There were still a sufficient number of peculiarities to gratify one who had an eye to the ludicrous. Sydney Smith soon discovered that it is a work of time to impart a humorous idea to a true Scot. "It requires," he used to say, "a surgical operation to get a joke well into a Scotch understanding." "They are so imbued with metaphysics, that they even make love metaphysically. I overheard a young lady of my acquaintance, at a dance in Edinburgh, exclaim in a sudden pause of the music, 'What you say, my Lord, is very true of love in the *abstract*, but—' here the fiddlers began fiddling furiously, and the rest was lost." He was, however, most deeply touched by the noble attribute of that nation which retains what is so rare—the attribute of being true friends. He did ample justice to their kindliness of heart. "If you meet with an accident," he said, "half Edinburgh immediately flocks to your doors to inquire after your *pure* hand, or your *pure* foot." "Their temper," he observed, "stands anything but an attack on their climate; even Jeffrey cannot shake off the illusion that myrtles flourish at

Craig Crook." The sharp reviewer stuck to his myrtle allusions, and treated Smith's attempts with as much contempt as if he had been a "wild visionary, who had never breathed his caller air," nor suffered under the rigors of his climate, nor spent five years in "discussing metaphysics and medicine in that garret end of the earth,—that knuckle end of England—that land of Calvin, oat-cakes, and sulphur," as Smith termed Scotland.

During two years he braved the winters, in which he declared hackney-coaches were drawn by four horses on account of the snow; where men were blown flat down on the face by the winds; and where even "experienced Scotch fowls did not dare to cross the streets, but sidled along, tails aloft, without venturing to encounter the gale." He luxuriated, nevertheless, in the true Scotch supper, than which nothing more pleasant and more unwholesome has ever been known in Christendom. Edinburgh is said to have been the only place where people dined twice a day. The writer of this memoir is old enough to remember the true Scottish *Attic* supper before its final "fading into wine and water," as Lord Cockburn describes its decline. "Suppers," Cockburn truly says, "are cheaper than dinners," and Edinburgh, at that time, was the cheapest place in Great Britain. Port and sherry were the staple wines; claret, duty free in Scotland until 1780, was indeed beginning to be a luxury; it was no longer the ordinary beverage, as it was when as Mac-

kenzie, the author of the "Man of Feeling," described —it used, upon the arrival of a cargo, to be sent through the town on a cart with a horse before it, so that every one might have a sample, by carrying a jug to be filled for sixpence: still even at the end of the eighteenth century it was in frequent use. Whisky toddy and plotty (red wine mulled with spices) came into the supper-room in ancient flagons or *stoups*, after a lengthy repast of broiled chickens, roasted moorfowl, pickled mussels, flummery, and numerous other good things had been discussed by a party who ate as if they had not dined that day. "We will eat," Lord Cockburn used to say after a long walk, "a profligate supper,"—a supper without regard to discretion, or digestion; and he usually kept his word.

In Edinburgh, Sydney Smith formed the intimate acquaintance of Lord Jeffrey, and that acquaintance ripened into a friendship only closed by death. The friendship of worthy, sensible men he looked upon as one of the greatest pleasures in life.

The "old suns," Lord Cockburn tells us, "were setting when the band of great thinkers and great writers who afterward concocted the 'Edinburgh Review' were rising into celebrity." Principal Robertson, the historian, had departed this life in 1793, a kindly old man. With beaming eyes underneath his frizzed and curled wig, and a trumpet tied with a black ribbon to the button-hole of his coat, for he was deaf, this most excellent of writers showed how he could

be also the most zealous of diners. Old Adam Ferguson, the historian of Rome, had "set," also: one of the finest specimens of humanity had gone from among his people in him. Old people, not thirty years ago, delighted to tell you how "Adam," when chaplain to the Black Watch, that glorious 42d, refused to retire to his proper place, the rear, during an action, but persisted in being engaged in front. He was also gone; and Dugald Stewart filled his vacant place in the professorship of moral philosophy. Dr. Henry, the historian, was also at rest; after a long laborious life, and the compilation of a dull, though admirable History of England, the design of which, in making a chapter on arts, manners, and literature separate from the narrative, appears to have suggested to Macaulay his inimitable disquisition on the same topics. Dr. Henry showed to a friend a pile of books which he had gone through, merely to satisfy himself and the world as to what description of trousers was worn by the Saxons. His death was calm as his life. "Come out to me directly," he wrote to his friend, Sir Harry Moncrieff: "I have got something to do this week; I have got to die."

It was in 1801, that Dugald Stewart began his course of lectures on political economy. Hitherto all public favor had been on the side of the Tories, and independence of thought was a sure way to incur discouragement from the Bench, in the Church, and from every Government functionary. Lectures on political

economy were regarded as innovations; but they formed a forerunner of that event which had made several important changes in our literary and political hemisphere: the commencement of the "Edinburgh Review." This undertaking was the work of men who were separated from the mass of their brother-townsmen by their politics; their isolation as a class binding them the more closely together by links never broken, in a brotherhood of hope and ambition, to which the natural spirits of Sydney Smith, of Cockburn, and of Jeffrey, gave an irresistible charm.

Among those who the most early in life ended a career of promise was Francis Horner. He was the son of a linen-draper in Edinburgh; or, as the Scotch call it, following the French, a merchant. Horner's best linen for sheets, and table-cloths, and all the *under garments* of housekeeping, are still highly esteemed by the trade.

"My desire to know Horner," Sydney Smith states, "arose from my being cautioned against him by some excellent and feeble-minded people to whom I brought letters of introduction, and who represented him as a person of violent political opinions." Sydney Smith interpreted this to mean that Horner was a man who thought for himself; who loved truth better than he loved Dundas (Lord Melville), then the tyrant of Scotland. "It is very curious to consider," Sydney Smith wrote, in addressing Lady Holland, in 1817, "in what manner Horner gained, in so extraordinary

a degree, the affections of such a number of persons of both sexes, all ages, parties, and ranks in society; for he was not remarkably good tempered, nor particularly lively and agreeable; and an inflexible politician on the unpopular side. The causes are, his high character for probity, honor, and talents; his fine countenance; the benevolent interest he took in the concerns of all his friends; his simple and gentlemanlike manners; his untimely death." "Grave, studious, honorable, kind, everything Horner did," says Lord Cockburn, "was marked by thoughtfulness and kindness;" a beautiful character, which was exhibited but briefly to his contemporaries, but long remembered after his death.

Henry Brougham was another of the Edinburgh band of young spirits. He was educated in the High School under Luke Fraser, the tutor who trained Walter Scott and Francis Jeffrey. Brougham used to be pointed out "as the fellow who had beat the master." He had dared to differ with Fraser, a hot pedant, on some piece of Latinity. Fraser, irritated, punished the rebel, and thought the matter ended. But the next day "Harry," as they called him, appeared, loaded with books, renewed the charge, and forced Luke to own that he was beaten. "It was then," says Lord Cockburn, "that I first saw him."

After remaining two years in Edinburgh, Sydney Smith went southward to marry a former schoolfellow of his sister Maria's—a Miss Pybus, to whom he had

been attached and engaged at a very early period of his life. The young lady, who was of West Indian descent, had some fortune; but her husband's only stock, on which to begin housekeeping, consisted of six silver tea-spoons, worn away with use. One day he rushed into the room and threw these attenuated articles into her lap—"There, Kate, I give you all my fortune, you lucky girl!"

With the small *dôt*, and the thin silver-spoons, the young couple set up housekeeping in the "garret end of the earth." Their first difficulty was to know how money could be obtained to begin with, for Mrs. Smith's small fortune was settled on herself by her husband's wish. Two rows of pearls had been given her by her thoughtful mother. These she converted into money, and obtained for them £500. Several years afterwards, when visiting the shop at which she sold them, with Miss Vernon and Miss Fox, Mrs. Smith saw her pearls, every one of which she knew. She asked what was the price. "£1500," was the reply.

The sum, however, was all important to the thrifty couple. It distanced the nightmare of the poor and honest,—debt. £750 was presented by Mr. Beach, in gratitude for the care of his son, to Smith. It was invested in the funds, and formed the nucleus of future savings,—"*Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*," is a trite saying. "*C'est le premier pas qui gagne*," might be applied to this and similar cases. A little

daughter—Lady Holland, the wife of the celebrated physician, Sir Henry Holland—was sent to bless the sensible pair. Sydney had wished that she might be born with one eye, so that he might never lose her; nevertheless, though she happened to be born with two, he bore her secretly from the nursery, a few hours after her birth, to show her in triumph to the future Edinburgh Reviewers.

The birth of the "Edinburgh Review" quickly followed that of the young lady. Jeffrey,—then an almost starving barrister, living in the eighth or ninth flat of a house in Buccleuch Place,—Brougham, and Sydney Smith were the triumvirate who propounded the scheme, Smith being the first mover. He proposed a motto: "Tenui Musam meditanum avenir:" We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal; but this being too near the truth, they took their motto from Publius Syrus; "of whom," said Smith, "none of us had, I am sure, read a single line." To this undertaking Sydney Smith devoted his talents for more than twenty-eight years.

Meantime, during the brief remainder of his stay in Edinburgh, his circumstances improved. He had done that which most of the clergy are obliged to do—taken a pupil. He had now another, the son of Mr. Gordon, of Ellon; for each of these young men he received £400 a year. He became to them a father and a friend; he entered into all their amusements. One of them saying that he could not find conversation at

the balls for his partners, "Never mind," cried Sydney Smith, "I'll fit you up in five minutes." Accordingly he wrote down conversations for them amid bursts of laughter.

Thus happily did years, which many persons would have termed a season of adversity, pass away. The chance which brought him to Edinburgh introduced him to a state of society never likely to be seen again in Scotland. Lord Cockburn's "Memorials" afford an insight into manners, not only as regarded suppers, but on the still momentous point, of dinners. Three o'clock was the fashionable hour so late as the commencement of the present century. That hour, "not without groans and predictions," became four—and four was long and conscientiously adhered to. "Inch by inch," people yielded, and five continued to be the standard polite hour from 1806 to 1820. "Six has at length prevailed."

The most punctilious ceremony existed. When dinner was announced, a file of ladies went first in strict order of precedence, "Mrs. Colonel Such an One;" "Mrs. Doctor Such an One," and so on. Toasts were *de rigueur:* no glass of wine was to be taken by a guest without comprehending a lady, or a covey of ladies. "I was present," says Lord Cockburn, "when the late Duke of Buccleuch took a glass of sherry by himself at the table of Charles Hope, then Lord Advocate, and this was noticed as a piece of ducal contempt." Toasts, and when the ladies had retired,

rounds of toasts, were drunk. "The prandial nuisance," Lord Cockburn wrote, "was horrible. But it was nothing to what followed."

At these repasts, though less at these than at boisterous suppers, a frequent visitor at the same table with Sydney Smith was the illustrious Sir James Mackintosh, a man to whose deep-thinking mind the world is every day rendering justice. The son of a brave officer, Mackintosh was born on the banks of Loch Ness: his mother, a Miss Fraser, was aunt to Mrs. Fraser Tytler, wife of Lord Woodhouselee, one of the judges of the Court of Session and mother of the late historian of that honored name.

Mackintosh had been studying at Aberdeen, in the same classes with Robert Hall, whose conversation, he avowed, had a great influence over his mind. He arrived in Edinburgh about 1784, uncertain to what profession to belong; somewhat anxious to be a bookseller, in order to revel in "the paradise of books;" he turned his attention, however, to medicine, and became a Brunonian, that is, a disciple of John Brown, the founder of a theory which he followed out to the extent in practice. The main feature of the now defunct system, which set scientific Europe in a blaze, seems to have been a mad indulgence of the passions and an unbridled use of intoxicating liquors. Brown fell a victim to his vices. Years after he had been laid in his grave, his daughter, Euphemia, being in great indigence, received real kindness from Sir

James and Lady Mackintosh, the former of whom used to delight in telling the story of her father's saying to her: "Effy, bring me the mooderate stimulus of a hoonderd draps o' laudanum in a glass o' brandy."

Mackintosh had not quitted Edinburgh when Sydney Smith reached it. Smith became a member of the famous Speculative Society. Their acquaintance was renewed years afterwards in London. Who can ever forget the small, quiet dinners given by Mackintosh when living out of Parliament and out of office in Cadogan Place? Simple but genial were those repasts, forming a strong contrast to the Edinburgh dinners of yore. He had then long given up both the theory and practice of the Brunonians, and took nothing but light French and German wines, and these in moderation. His tall, somewhat high-shouldered, massive form; his calm brow, mild, thoughtful; his dignity of manner; his gentleness to all; his vast knowledge; his wonderful appreciation of excellence; his discrimination of faults,—all combined to form one of the finest specimens ever seen, even in that illustrious period, of a philosopher and historian.

Jeffrey and Cockburn were contrasts to one whom they honored. Jeffrey, "the greatest of British critics," was eight years younger than Mackintosh, having been born in 1773. He was the son of one of the depute clerks to the Supreme Court, not an elevated position, though one of great respectability. When Mackintosh and Sydney Smith first knew him in

Edinburgh, he was enduring, with all the impatience of his sensitive nature, what he called "a slow, obscure, philosophical starvation" at the Scotch bar.

"There are moments," he wrote, "when I think I could sell myself to the ministers or to the devil, in order to get above these necessities." Like all men so situated, his depression came in fits. Short, spare, with regular, yet *not* aristocratic features;—speaking, brilliant, yet *not* pleasing eyes;—a voice consistent with that *mignon* form;—a somewhat precise and anxious manner, there was never in Jeffrey that charm, that *abandon*, which rendered his valued friend, Henry Cockburn, the most delightful, the most beloved of men, the very idol of his native city.

The noble head of Cockburn, bald almost in youth, with its pliant, refined features, and its fresh tint upon a cheek always clear, generally high in color, was a strong contrast to the rigid *petitesse* of Jeffrey's physiognomy; much more so to the large proportions of Mackintosh; or to the ponderous, plain, and, later in life, swarthy countenance of Sydney Smith. Lord Webb Seymour, the brother of the late Duke of Somerset, gentle, modest, intelligent,—Thomas Thomson, the antiquary,—and Charles and George Bell, the surgeon and the advocate,—Murray, afterwards Lord Murray, the generous pleader, who gave up to its rightful heirs an estate left him by a client,—and Brougham—formed the staple of that set now long since extinct.

It was partially broken up by Sydney Smith's coming, in 1803, to London. He there took a house in Doughty Street, being partial to legal society, which was chiefly to be found in that neighborhood.

Here Sir Samuel Romilly, Mackintosh, Scarlett (Lord Abinger), the eccentric and unhappy Mr. Ward, afterwards Lord Dudley, "Conversation" Sharp, Rogers, and Luttrell, formed the circle in which Sydney delighted. He was still very poor, and obliged to sell the rest of his wife's jewels; but his brother Robert allowed him £100 a year, and lent him, when he subsequently removed into Yorkshire, £500.

He had now a life of struggling, but those struggles were the lot of his early friends also; Mackintosh talked of going to India as a lecturer; Smith recommended Jeffrey to do the same. Happily, both had the courage and the sense to wait for better times at home; yet Smith's opinion of Mackintosh was, that "he never saw so theoretical a head which contained so much practical understanding;" and to Jeffrey he wrote:

"You want nothing to be a great lawyer, and nothing to be a great speaker, but a deeper voice—slower and more simple utterance—more humility of face and neck—and a greater contempt for *esprit* than men *who have so much* in general attain to."

The great event of Sydney Smith's first residence in London was his introduction at Holland House; in that "gilded room which furnished," as he said, "the best

and most agreeable society in the world," his happiest hours were passed. John Allen, whom Smith had introduced to Lord Holland, was the peer's librarian and friend. Mackintosh, whom Sydney Smith thought only wanted a few bad qualities to get on in the world, Rogers, Luttrell, Sheridan, Byron, were among the "suns" that shone, where Addison had suffered and studied.

Between Lord Holland and Sydney Smith the most cordial friendship existed; and the eccentric and fascinating Lady Holland was his constant correspondent. Of this able woman, it was said by Talleyrand: "*Elle est toute assertion; mais quand on demande la preuve c'est là son sécret.*" Of Lord Holland the keen diplomatist observed: "*C'est lâ bienveillance même, mais la bienveillance la plus perturbatrice, qu'on ait jamais vue.*"

Lord Holland did not commit the error ascribed by Rogers, in his Recollections, to Marlay, Bishop of Waterford, who, when poor, with an income of only £400 a year, used to give the best dinners possible; but, when made a bishop, enlarged his table and lost his fame—had no more good company—there was an end of his enjoyment: he had lords and ladies to his table—foolish people—foolish men—and foolish women—and there was an end of him and us. "Lord Holland selected his lords and ladies, not for their rank, but for their peculiar merits or acquirements." Then even Lady Holland's oddities were amusing. When she

wanted to get rid of a fop, she used to say: "I beg your pardon, but I wish you would sit a little farther off; there is something on your handkerchief which I don't quite like." Or when a poor man happened to stand, after the fashion of the lords of creation, with his back close to the chimney-piece, she would cry out, "Have the goodness, sir, to stir the fire."

Lord Holland never asked any one to dinner ("not even *me*," says Rogers, "whom he had known so long") without asking Lady Holland. One day, shortly before his lordship's death, Rogers was coming out from Holland House when he met him. "'Well, do you return to dinner?' I answered, 'No, I have not been invited.'" The precaution, in fact, was necessary, for Lord Holland was so good-natured and hospitable that he would have had a crowd daily at his table had he been left to himself.

The death of Lord Holland completely broke up the unrivalled dinners, and the subsequent evenings in the "gilded chamber." Lady Holland, to whom Holland House was left for her life-time, declined to live there. With Holland House, the mingling of aristocracy with talent; the blending ranks by force of intellect; the assembling not only of all the celebrity that Europe could boast, but of all that could enhance private enjoyment, had ceased. London, the most intelligent of capitals, possesses not one single great house in which pomp and wealth are made subsidiary to the true luxury of intellectual conversation.

On the morning of the day when Lord Holland's last illness began, these lines were written by him, and found after his death on his dressing-table:—

"Nephew of Fox, and Friend of Grey,
Sufficient for my fame,
If those who know me best shall say
I tarnished neither name."

Of him his best friend, Sydney Smith, left a short but discriminative character. "There was never (amongst other things he says) a better heart, or one more purified from all the bad passions—more abounding in charity and compassion—or which seemed to be so created as a refuge to the helpless and oppressed."

Meantime Sydney Smith circumstances were still limited; £50 a year as evening preacher to the Foundling Hospital was esteemed as a great help by him. The writer of this memoir remembers an amusing anecdote related of him at the table of an eminent literary character by a member of Lord Woodhouselee's family, who had been desirous to obtain for Sydney the patronage of the godly. To this end she persuaded Robert Grant and Charles Grant (afterwards Lord Glenelg) to go to the Foundling to hear him, she hoped to advantage; to her consternation he broke forth into so familiar a strain, couched in terms so bordering on the jocose,—though no one had deeper religious convictions than he had,—that the two saintly brothers listened in disgust. They forgot how South

let loose the powers of his wit and sarcasm, and how the lofty-minded Jeremy Taylor applied the force of humor to lighten the prolixity of argument. Sydney Smith became, nevertheless, a most popular preacher; but the man who prevents people from sleeping once a week in their pews is sure to be criticised.

Let us turn to him, however, as a member of society. His circle of acquaintance was enlarged, not only by his visits to Holland House, but by his lectures on moral philosophy at the Royal Institution. Sir Robert Peel, not the most impressionable of men, but one whose cold shake of the hand is said—as Sydney Smith said of Sir James Mackintosh—"to have come under the genus *Mortmain*," was a very young man at the time when Albemarle Street was crowded with carriages from one end of the street to the other, in consequence of Sydney Smith's lectures; yet he declared that he had never forgotten the effect given to the speech of Logan, the Indian chief, by Sydney's voice and manner.

His lectures produced a sum sufficient for Sydney to furnish a house in Orchard Street. Doughty Street—raised to celebrity as having been the residence, not only of Sydney Smith, but of Charles Dickens—was too far for the *habitué* of Holland House and the orator of Albemarle Street long to sojourn there. In Orchard Street, Sydney enjoyed that domestic comfort which he called "the grammar of life;" delightful suppers, to about twenty or thirty persons, who came and

went as they pleased. A great part of the same amusing and gifted set used to meet once a week also at Sir James Mackintosh's, at a supper, which, though not exactly Cowper's "radish and an egg," was simple, but plentiful—yet most eagerly sought after. "There are a few living," writes Sydney Smith's daughter, "who can look back to them, and I have always found them do so with a sigh of regret."

One night, a country cousin of Sydney Smith's was present at a supper. "Now, Sydney," whispered the simple girl, "I know all these are very remarkable people; do tell me who they are."—"Oh, yes; there's Hannibal," pointing to a grave, dry, stern man, Mr. Whishaw; "he lost his leg in the Carthaginian war: there's Socrates," pointing to Luttrell: "that," he added, turning to Horner, "is Solon."

Another evening, Mackintosh brought a raw Scotch cousin—an ensign in a Highland regiment—with him. The young man's head could carry no idea of glory except in regimentals. Suddenly, nudging Sir James, he whispered, "Is that the great Sir Sydney Smith?" —"Yes, yes," answered Sir James; and instantly telling Sydney who he was supposed to be, the grave evening preacher at the Foundling immediately assumed the character ascribed to him, and acted the hero of Acre to perfection, fighting his battles over again—even charging the Turks—whilst the young Scot was so enchanted by the great Sir Sydney's condescension, that he wanted to fetch the pipers of his

regiment, and pipe to the great Sir Sydney, who had never enjoyed the agonizing strains of a bagpipe. Upon this the party broke up, and Sir James carried the Highlander off, lest he should find out his mistake, and cut his throat from shame and vexation. One may readily conceive Sydney Smith's enjoying this joke, for his spirits were those of a boy: his gayety was irresistible; his ringing laugh, infectious; but it is difficult for those who knew Mackintosh in his later years—the quiet, almost pensive invalid—to realize in that remembrance any trace of the Mackintosh of Doughty Street and Orchard Street days.

One day Sydney Smith came home with two hackney coaches full of pictures, which he had picked up at an auction. His daughter thus tells the story: "Another day he came home with two hackney-coach loads of pictures, which he had met with at an auction, having found it impossible to resist so many yards of brown-looking figures and faded landscapes going for 'absolutely nothing, unheard of sacrifices.' 'Kate' hardly knew whether to laugh or cry when she saw those horribly dingy-looking objects enter her pretty little drawing-room, and looked at him as if she thought him half mad; and half mad he was, but with delight at his purchase. He kept walking up and down the room, waving his arms, putting them in fresh lights, declaring they were exquisite specimens of art, and if not by the very best masters, merited to be so. He invited his friends, and displayed his pic-

tures; discovered fresh beauties for each new comer; and for three or four days, under the magic influence of his wit and imagination, these gloomy old pictures were a perpetual source of amusement and fun."

At last, finding that he was considered no authority for the fine arts, off went the pictures to another auction, but all re-christened by himself with unheard-of names. "One, I remember," says Lady Holland, "was a beautiful landscape, by Nicholas de Falda, a pupil of Valdezzio, the only painting by that eminent artist. The pictures sold, I believe, for rather less than he gave for them under their original names, which were probably as real as their assumed ones." Sydney Smith had long been styled by his friends the "Bishop of Mickleham," in allusion to his visits to, and influence in, the house of his friend, Richard Sharp, who had a cottage at that place. A piece of real preferment was now his. This was the living of Foston-le-Clay, in Yorkshire, given him by Lord Erskine, then Chancellor. Lady Holland never rested till she had prevailed on Erskine to give Sydney Smith a living. Smith, as Rogers relates, went to thank his lordship. "Oh," said Erskine, "don't thank me, Mr. Smith; I gave you the living because Lady Holland insisted on my doing so; and if she had desired me to give it to the devil, *he* must have had it."

Notwithstanding the prediction of the saints, Sydney Smith proved an excellent parish priest. Even his most admiring friends did not expect this result.

The general impression was, that he was infinitely better fitted for the bar than for the church. "Ah! Mr. Smith," Lord Stowell used to say to him, "you would be in a far better situation, and a far richer man, had you belonged to us."

One *jeu d'esprit* more, and Smith hastened to take possession of his living, and to enter upon duties of which no one better knew the mighty importance than he did.

Among the Mackintosh set was Richard Sharp, to whom we have already referred, termed, from his great knowledge and ready memory, "Conversation Sharp." Many people may think that he did not imply an agreeable man, and they were, perhaps, right. Sharp was a plain, ungainly man. One evening, a literary lady, now living, being at Sir James Mackintosh's, in company with Sharp, Sismondi, and the late Lord Denman, then a man of middle age, Sir James was not only particularly partial to Denman, but admired him personally. "Do you not think Denman handsome?" he inquired of the lady after the guests were gone.—"No? Then you must think Mr. Sharp handsome," he rejoined; meaning that a taste so perverted as not to admire Denman must be smitten with Sharp. Sharp is said to have studied all the morning before he went out to dinner, to get up his wit and anecdote, as an actor does his part. Sydney Smith having one day received an invitation from him to dine at Fishmongers' Hall, sent the following reply:—

"Much do I love
The monsters of the deep to eat;
To see the rosy salmon lying,
By smelts encircled, born for frying;
And from the china boat to pour
On flaky cod the flavored shower.
Thee above all, I much regard,
Flatter than Longman's flattest bard,
Much-honor'd turbot! sore I grieve
Thee and thy dainty friends to leave.
Far from ye all, in snuggest corner,
I go to dine with little Horner;
He who with philosophic eye
Sat brooding o'er his Christmas pie;
Then firm resolved, with either thumb
Tore forth the crust-enveloped plum;
And mad with youthful dreams of deathless fame,
Proclaimed the deathlesss glories of his name."

One word before we enter on the subject of Sydney Smith's ministry. In this biography of a great Wit, we touch but lightly upon the graver features of his character, yet they cannot wholly be passed over. Staunch in his devotion to the Church of England, he was liberal to others. The world in the present day is afraid of liberality. Let it not be forgotten that it has been the fanatic and the intolerant, not the mild and practical, among us who have gone from the Protestant to the Romish faith. Sydney Smith, in common with other great men, had no predilection for dealing damnation round the land. How noble, how true, are Mackintosh's reflections on religious sects! "It is

impossible, I think, to look into the interior of any religious sect without thinking better of it. I ought, indeed, to confine myself to those of Christian Europe, but with that limitation it seems to me the remark is true; whether I look at the Jansenists of Port Royal, or the Quakers in Clarkson, or the Methodists in these journals. All these sects, which appear dangerous or ridiculous at a distance, assume a much more amicable character on nearer inspection. They all inculcate pure virtue, and practise mutual kindness; and they exert great force of reason in rescuing their doctrines from the absurd or pernicious consequences which naturally flow from them. Much of this arises from the general nature of religious principle—much also from the genius of the Gospel."

Nothing could present a greater contrast with the comforts of Orchard Street than the place on which Sydney Smith's "lines" had now "fallen." Owing to the non-residence of the clergy, one-third of the parsonage-houses in England had fallen into decay, but that of Foston-le-Clay was pre-eminently wretched. A hovel represented what was still called the parsonage-house: it stood on a glebe of three hundred acres of the stiffest clay in Yorkshire: a brick-floored kitchen, with a room above it, both in a ruinous condition, was the residence which, for a hundred and fifty years, had never been inhabited by an incumbent. It will not be a matter of surprise that for some time, until 1808, Sydney Smith, with the permission of the

Archbishop of York, continued to reside in London, after having appointed a curate at Foston-le-Clay.

The first visit to his living was by no means promising. Picture to yourself, my reader, Sydney Smith in a carriage, in his superfine black coat, driving into the remote village, and parleying with the old parish clerk, who, after some conversation, observed, emphatically, shaking his stick on the ground, "Master Smith, it stroikes me that people as comes froe London is such *fools*."—"I see *you* are no fool," was the prompt answer; and the parson and the clerk parted mutually satisfied.

The profits arising from the sale of two volumes of sermons carried Sydney Smith, his family, and his furniture, to Foston-le-Clay in the summer of 1809, and he took up his abode in a pleasant house about two miles from York, at Heslington.

Let us now, for a time, forget the wit, the editor of the "Edinburgh Review," the diner-out, the evening preacher at the Foundling, and glance at the peaceful and useful life of a country clergyman. His spirits, his wit, all his social qualities, never deserted Sydney Smith, even in the retreat to which he was destined. Let us see him driving in his second-hand carriage, his horse, "Peter the Cruel," with Mrs. Smith by his side, summer and winter, from Heslington to Foston-le-Clay. Mrs. Smith, at first, trembled at the inexperience of her charioteer: but "she soon," said Sydney, "raised my wages, and considered me an excellent Jehu."

"Mr. Brown," said Sydney to one of the tradesmen of York, through the streets of which he found it difficult to drive, "your streets are the narrowest in Europe."—"Narrow, sir? there's plenty of room for two carriages to pass each other, and an inch and a half to spare!"

Let us see him in his busy peaceful life, digging an hour or two every day in his garden to avoid sudden death, by preventing corpulency; then galloping through a book, and when his family laughed at him for so soon dismissing a quarto, saying, "Cross-examine me, then," and going well through the ordeal. Hear him, after finishing his morning's writing, saying to his wife, "There, Kate, it's done: do look over it; put the dots to the i's, and cross the t's:" and off he went to his walk, surrounded by his children, who were his companions and confidants. See him in the lane, talking to an old woman whom he had taken into his gig as she was returning from market, and picking up all sorts of knowledge from her; or administering medicine to the poor, or to his horses and animals, sometimes committing mistakes next to fatal. One day he declared he found all his pigs intoxicated, grunting "God save the King" about the stye. He nearly poisoned his red cow by an over-dose of castor-oil; and Peter the Cruel, so called because the groom once said he had a cruel face, took two boxes of opium pills (boxes and all) in his mash, without ill consequences.

See him, too, rushing out after dinner—for he had a

horror of long sittings after that meal—to look at his "scratcher." He used to say, Lady Holland (his daughter) relates, "I am all for cheap luxuries, even for animals; now all animals have a passion for scratching their backbones; they break down your gates and palings to effect this. Look! there is my universal scratcher, a sharp-edged pole, resting on a high and a low post, adapted to every height, from a horse to a lamb. Even the Edinburgh Reviewer can take his turn: you have no idea how popular it is; I have not had a gate broken since I put it up; I have it in all my fields."

Then his experiments were numerous. Mutton fat was to be burned instead of candles; and working-people were brought in and fed with broth, or with rice, or with porridge, to see which was the most satisfying diet. Economy was made amusing, benevolence almost absurd, but the humorous man, the kind man, shone forth in all things. He was one of the first, if not the first, who introduced allotment gardens for the poor: he was one who could truly say at the last, when he had lived sixty-six years, "I have done but very little harm in the world, and I have brought up my family."

We have taken a glimpse—and a glimpse merely—of the "wise Wit" in London, among congenial society, where every intellectual power was daily called forth in combative force. See him now in the provincial circles of the remote county of York. "Did you ever,"

he once asked, "dine out in the country? What misery do human beings inflict on each other under the name of pleasure!" Then he describes driving in a broiling sun through a dusty road, to eat a haunch of venison at the house of a neighboring parson. Assembled in a small house, "redolent of frying," talked of roads, weather, and turnips: began, that done, to be hungry. A stripling, caught up for the occasion, calls the master of the house out of the room, and announces that the cook has mistaken the soup for dirty water, and has thrown it away. No help for it—agreed; they must do without; perhaps as well they should. Dinner announced; they enter the dining-room: heavens! what a gale! the venison is high!

Various other adverse incidents occur, and the party return home, grateful to the post-boys for not being drunk, and thankful to Providence for not being thrown into a wet ditch.

In addition to these troubles and risks, there was an enemy at hand to apprehend—prejudice. The Squire of Heslington—"the last of the Squires"—regarded Mr. Smith as a Jacobin; and his lady, "who looked as if she had walked straight out of the Ark, or had been the wife of Enoch," used to turn aside as he passed. When, however, the Squire found "the peace of the village undisturbed, harvests as usual, his dogs uninjured, he first bowed, then called, and ended by a pitch of confidence;" actually discovered that Sydney Smith had made a joke; nearly went into convulsions

of laughter, and finished by inviting the "dangerous fellow," as he had once thought him, to see his dogs.

In 1813 Sydney Smith removed, as he thought it his duty to do, to Foston-le-Clay, and, "not knowing a turnip from a carrot," began to farm three hundred acres, and not having any money, to build a parsonage-house.

It was a model parsonage, he thought, the plan being formed by himself and "Kate." Being advised by his neighbors to purchase oxen, he bought (and christened) four oxen, "Tug and Lug," "Crawl and Haul." But Tug and Lug took to fainting, Haul and Crawl to lie down in the mud, so he was compelled to sell them, and to purchase a team of horses.

The house plunged him into debt for twenty years; and a man-servant being too expensive, the "wise Wit" caught up a country girl, made like a milestone, and christened her "Bunch," and Bunch became the best butler in the county.

He next set up a carriage, which he christened the "Immortal," for it grew, from being only an ancient green chariot, supposed to have been the earliest invention of the kind, to be known by all the neighbors; the village dogs barked at it, the village boys cheered it, and "we had no false shame."

One could linger over the annals of Sydney Smith's useful, happy life at Foston-le-Clay, visited there indeed by Mackintosh, and each day achieving a higher and higher reputation in literature. We see him as a

magistrate, "no friend to game," as a country squire in Suffolk solemnly said of a neighbor, but a friend to man; with a pitying heart, that forbade him to commit young delinquents to jail, though he would lecture them severely, and call out, in bad cases, "John, bring me out my *private gallows*," which brought the poor boys on their knees. We behold him making visits, and even tours, in the "Immortal," and receiving Lord and Lady Carlisle in their coach and four, which had stuck in the middle of a ploughed field, there being scarcely any road, only a lane, up to the house. Behold him receiving his poor friend, Francis Horner, who came to take his last leave of him, and died at Pisa, in 1817, after earning honors, paid, as Sir James Mackintosh remarked, to intrinsic claims alone—"a man of obscure birth, who never filled an office." See Sydney Smith, in 1816, from the failure of the harvest (he who was in London "a walking patty"), sitting down with his family to a repast without bread, thin, unleavened cakes being the substitute. See his cheerfulness, his submission to many privations: picture him to ourselves trying to ride, but falling off incessantly; but obliged to leave off riding "for the good of his family, and the peace of his parish" (he had christened his horse "Calamity"). See him suddenly prostrate from that steed in the midst of the streets of York, "to the great joy of Dissenters," he declares: another time flung as if he had been a shuttlecock, into a neighboring parish, very glad that

it was not a neighboring planet, for somehow or other his horse and he had a "trick of parting company." "I used," he wrote, "to think a fall from a horse dangerous, but much experience has convinced me to the contrary. I have had six falls in two years, and just behaved like the Three per Cents., when they fell—I got up again, and am not a bit the worse for it, any more than the stock in question."

His country life was varied by many visits. In 1820 he went to visit Lord Grey, then to Edinburgh, to Jeffrey. Travelling by the coach, a gentleman, with whom he had been talking, said, "There is a very clever fellow lives near here, Sydney Smith, I believe; a devilish odd fellow."—"He may be an odd fellow," cried Sydney, taking off his hat, "but here he is, odd as he is, at your service."

Sydney Smith found great changes in Edinburgh—changes, however, in many respects for the better. The society of Edinburgh was then in its greatest perfection. "Its brilliancy," Lord Cockburn remarks, "was owing to a variety of peculiar circumstances, which only operated during this period." The principal of these were the survivance of several of the eminent men of the preceding age, and of curious old habits, which the modern flood had not yet obliterated; the rise of a powerful community of young men of ability; the exclusion of the British from the Continent, which made this place, both for education and for residence, a favorite resort of strangers; the war,

which maintained a constant excitement of military preparation and of military idleness: the blaze of that popular literature which made this the second city in the empire for learning and science; and the extent and the ease with which literature and society embellished each other, without rivalry, and without pedantry.

Among the "best young," as his lordship styles them, were Lord Webb Seymour and Francis Horner; whilst those of the "interesting old" most noted were Elizabeth Hamilton and Mrs. Grant of Laggan, who had "unfolded herself," to borrow Lord Cockburn's words, in the "Letters from the Mountains," "an interesting treasury of good solitary thoughts." Of these two ladies, Lord Cockburn says, "They were excellent women, and not *too* blue. Their sense covered the color." It was to Mrs. Hamilton that Jeffrey said, "That there were no objection to the blue stocking, provided the petticoat came low enough to cover it." Neither of these ladies possessed personal attractions. Mrs. Hamilton had the plain face proper to literary women; Mrs. Grant was a tall dark woman, with much dignity of manner: in spite of her life of misfortune, she had a great flow of spirits. Beautifully, indeed, does Lord Cockburn render justice to her character: "She was always under the influence of an affectionate and delightful enthusiasm, which, unquenched by time and sorrow, survived the wreck of many domestic attachments, and shed a glow over the close of a very protracted life."

Both she and Mrs. Hamilton succeeded in drawing to their *conversazioni*, in small rooms of unpretending style, men of the highest order, as well as attractive women of intelligence. Society in Edinburgh took the form of Parisian *soirées*, and although much divided into parties, was sufficiently general to be varied. It is amusing to find that Mrs. Grant was at one time one of the supposed "Authors of 'Waverley,'" until the disclosure of the mystery silenced reports. It was the popularity of "Marmion" that made Scott, as he himself confesses, nearly lose his footing. Mrs. Grant's observation on him, after meeting the Great Unknown at some brilliant party, has been allowed, even by the sarcastic Lockhart, to be "witty enough." "Mr. Scott always seems to me to be like a glass, through which the rays of admiration pass without sensibly affecting it; but the bit of paper[1] that lies beside it will presently be in a blaze—and no wonder."

Scott endeavored to secure Mrs. Grant a pension; merited, as he observes, by her as an authoress, "but much more," in his opinion, "by the firmness and elasticity of mind with which she had borne a great succession of domestic calamities." "Unhappily," he adds, "there was only about £100 open on the Pension List, and this the minister assigned in equal portions to Mrs. G—— and a distressed lady, grand-daughter of a forfeited Scottish nobleman. Mrs. G——, proud

[1] Alluding to Lady Scott.

as a Highlandwoman, vain as a poetess, and absurd as a blue stocking, has taken this partition in *malam partem*, and written to Lord Melville about her merits, and that her friends do not consider her claims as being fairly canvassed, with something like a demand that her petition be submitted to the king. This is not the way to make her *plack* a *bawbee*, and Lord M——, a little *miffed* in turn, sends the whole correspondence to me to know whether Mrs. G—— will accept the £50 or not. Now, hating to deal with ladies when they are in an unreasonable humor, I have got the good-humored Man of Feeling to find out the lady's mind, and I take on myself the task of making her peace with Lord M——. After all, the poor lady is greatly to be pitied:—her sole remaining daughter deep and far gone in a decline."

The Man of Feeling proved successful, and reported soon afterwards that the "dirty pudding" was eaten by the almost destitute authoress. Scott's tone in the letters which refer to this subject does little credit to his good taste and delicacy of feeling, which were really attributable to his character.

Very few notices occur of any intercourse between Scott and Sydney Smith in Lockhart's "Life." It was not, indeed, until 1827 that Scott could be sufficiently cooled down from the ferment of politics which had been going on to meet Jeffrey and Cockburn. When he dined, however, with Murray, then Lord Advocate, and met Jeffrey, Cockburn, the late Lord

Rutherford, then Mr. Rutherford, and others of "that file," he pronounced the party to be "very pleasant, capital good cheer, and excellent wine, much laugh and fun. I do not know," he writes, "how it is, but when I am out with a party of my Opposition friends, the day is often merrier than when with our own set. Is it because they are cleverer? Jeffrey and Harry Cockburn are, to be sure, very extraordinary men, yet it is not owing to that entirely. I believe both parties meet with the feeling of something like novelty. We have not worn out our jests in daily contact. There is also a disposition on such occasions to be courteous, and of course to be pleased."

On his side, Cockburn did ample justice to the "genius who," to use his own words, "has immortalized Edinburgh and delighted the world." Mrs. Scott could not, however, recover the smarting inflicted by the critiques of Jeffrey on her husband's works. Her —"And I hope, Mr. Jeffrey, Mr. Constable paid you well for your article" (Jeffrey dining with her that day), had a depth of simple satire in it that even an Edinburgh Reviewer could hardly exceed. It was, one must add, impertinent and in bad taste. "You are very good at cutting up."

Sydney Smith found Jeffrey and Cockburn rising barristers. Horner, on leaving Edinburgh, had left to Jeffrey his bar wig, and the bequest had been lucky. Jeffrey was settled at Craigcrook, a lovely English-looking spot, with wooded slopes and green glades, near

Edinburgh; and Cockburn had, since 1811, set up his rural gods at Bonally, near Colinton, just under the Pentland Hills, and he wrote, "Unless some avenging angel shall expel me, I shall never leave that paradise." And a paradise it was. Beneath those rough, bare hills, broken here and there by a trickling burn, like a silver thread on the brown sward, stands a Norman tower, the addition, by Playfair's skill, to what was once a scarcely habitable farmhouse. That tower contained Lord Cockburn's fine library, also his ordinary sitting-rooms. There he read and wrote, and received such society as will never meet again, there or elsewhere—amongst them Sydney Smith. Beneath—around the tower—stretches a delicious garden, composed of terraces, and laurel-hedged walks, and beds of flowers, that bloomed freely in that sheltered spot. A bowling-green, shaded by one of the few trees near the house, a sycamore, was the care of many an hour; for to make the turf velvety, the sods were fetched from the hills above—from "yon hills," as Lord Cockburn would have called them. And this was for many years one of the rallying points of the best Scottish society, and, as each autumn came round, of what the host called his Carnival. Friends were summoned from the north and the south—"death no apology." High jinks within doors, excursions without. Every Edinburgh man reveres the spot, hallowed by the remembrance of Lord Cockburn. "Every thing except the two burns," he wrote, "the few old trees, and the moun-

tains, are my own work. Human nature is incapable of enjoying more happiness than has been my lot here. I have been too happy, and often tremble in the anticipation that the cloud must come at last." And come it did; but found him not unprepared, although the burden that he had to bear in after-life was heavy. In their enlarged and philosophic minds, in their rapid transition from sense to nonsense, there was an affinity in the characters of Sydney Smith and of Lord Cockburn which was not carried out in any other point. Smith's conversation was wit—Lord Cockburn's was eloquence.

From the festivities of Edinburgh, Sydney Smith returned contentedly to Foston-le-Clay, and to Bunch. Amongst other gifted visitors was Mrs. Marcet. "Come here, Bunch," cries Sydney Smith one day; "come and repeat your crimes to Mrs. Marcet." Then Bunch, grave as a judge, began to repeat: "Plate-snatching, gravy-spilling, door-slamming, blue-bottle-fly-catching, and curtsey-bobbing." "Blue-bottle-fly-catching," means standing with her mouth open, and not attending; and "curtsey-bobbing" was curtseying to the centre of the earth.

One night, in the winter, during a tremendous snow storm, Bunch rushed in, exclaiming, "Lord and Lady Mackincrush is com'd in a coach and four." The lord and lady proved to be Sir James and his daughter, who had arrived to stay with his friends in the remote parsonage of Foston-le-Clay a few days, and had sent a

letter, which arrived the day afterwards, to announce their visit. Their stay began with a blunder; and when Sir James departed, leaving kind feelings behind him—books, his hat, his gloves, his papers, and other articles of apparel were found also. "What a man that would be," said Sydney Smith, "had he one particle of gall, or the least knowledge of the value of red tape!" It was true that the indolent, desultory character of Mackintosh interfered perpetually with his progress in the world. He loved far better to lie on the sofa reading a novel than to attend a Privy Council; the slighest indisposition was made on his part a plea for avoiding the most important business.

Sydney Smith had said that "when a clever man takes to cultivating turnips and retiring, it is generally an imposture;" but in him the retirement was no imposture. His wisdom shone forth daily in small and great matters. "Life," he justly thought, "was to be fortified by many friendships," and he acted up to his principles, and kept up friendships by letters. Cheerfulness he thought might be cultivated by making the rooms one lives in as comfortable as possible. His own drawing-room was papered on this principle, with a yellow flowering pattern; and filled with "irregular regularities;" his fires were blown into brightness by *Shadrachs*, as he called them—tubes furnished with air opening in the centre of each fire. His library contained his rheumatic armor: for he tried heat and compression in rheumatism; put his legs into narrow

buckets, which he called his jack-boots; wore round his throat a tin collar; over each shoulder he had a large tin thing like a shoulder of mutton; and on his head he displayed a hollow helmet filled with hot water. In the middle of a field into which his windows looked, was a skeleton sort of a machine, his Universal Scratcher, with which every animal from a lamb to a bullock could scratch itself. Then on the Sunday the Immortal was called into use, to travel in state to a church like a barn; about fifty people in it; but the most original idea was farming through the medium of a tremendous speaking-trumpet from his own door, with its companion, a telescope, to see what his people are about! On the 24th of January, 1828, the first notable piece of preferment was conferred on him by Lord Lyndhurst, then Chancellor, and of widely differing political opinions to Sydney Smith. This was a vacant stall in the cathedral at Bristol, where on the ensuing 5th of November, the new canon gave the Mayor and Corporation of that Protestant city such a dose of "toleration as should last them many a year." He went to Court on his appointment, and appeared in shoestrings instead of buckles. "I found," he relates, "to my surprise, people looking down at my feet: I could not think what they were at. At first I thought they had discovered the beauty of my legs; but at last the truth burst on me, by some wag laughing and thinking I had done it as a good joke. I was, of course, exceedingly annoyed to

have been supposed capable of such a vulgar unmeaning piece of disrespect, and kept my feet as coyly under my petticoats as the veriest prude in the country till I should make my escape." His circumstances were now improved, and though moralists, he said, thought property an evil, he declared himself happier every guinea he gained. He thanked God for his animal spirits, which received, unhappily, in 1829, a terrible shock from the death of his eldest son, Douglas, aged twenty-four. This was the great misfortune of his life; the young man was promising, talented, affectionate. He exchanged Foston-le-Clay at this time for a living in Somersetshire, of a beautiful and characteristic name—Combe Florey.

Combe Florey seems to have been an earthly paradise, seated in one of those delicious hollows, or in combes, for which that part of the west of England is celebrated. His withdrawal from the Edinburgh Review—Mackintosh's death—the marriage of his eldest daughter, Saba, to Dr. Holland (now Sir Henry Holland)—the termination of Lord Grey's Administration, which ended Sydney's hopes of being a bishop, were the leading events of his life for the next few years.

It appears that Sydney Smith felt to the hour of his death pained that those by whose side he had fought for fifty years in their adversity, the Whig party, should never have offered what he declared he should have rejected, a bishopric, when they were constantly bestowing such promotions on persons of mediocre

talents and claims. Waiving the point, whether it is right or wrong to make men bishops because they have been political partisans, the cause of this alleged injustice may be found in the tone of the times, which was eminently tinctured with cant. The Clapham sect were in the ascendancy; and Ministers scarcely dared to offend so influential a body. Even the gentle Sir James Mackintosh refers, in his Journal, with disgust to the phraseology of the day:—

"They have introduced a new language, in which they never say that A. B. is good, or virtuous, or even religious; but that he is an 'advanced Christian.' Dear Mr. Wilberforce is an 'advanced Christian.' Mrs. C. has lost three children without a pang, and is so 'advanced a Christian' that she could see the remaining twenty, 'with poor dear Mr. C.,' removed with perfect tranquillity."

Such was the disgust expressed towards that school by Mackintosh, whose last days were described by his daughter as having been passed in silence and thought, with his Bible before him, breaking that silence—and portentous silence—to speak of God, and of his Maker's disposition towards man. His mind ceased to be occupied with speculations; politics interested him no more. His own "personal relationship to his Creator" was the subject of his thoughts. Yet Mackintosh was not by any means considered as an advanced Christian, or even as a Christian at all, by the zealots of his time.

Sydney Smith's notions of a bishop were certainly by no means carried out in his own person and character. "I never remember in my time," he said, "a real bishop: a grave, elderly man, full of Greek, with sound views of the middle voice and preterpluperfect tense; gentle and kind to his poor clergy, of powerful and commanding eloquence in Parliament, never to be put down when the great interests of mankind were concerned, leaning to the Government when it was right, leaning to the people when they were right; feeling that if the Spirit of God had called him to that high office, he was called for no mean purpose, but rather that seeing clearly, acting boldly, and intending purely, he might confer lasting benefit upon mankind."

In 1831 Lord Grey appointed Sydney Smith a Canon residentiary of St. Paul's; but still the mitre was withheld, although it has since appeared that Lord Grey had destined him for one of the first vacancies in England.

Henceforth his residence at St. Paul's brought him still more continually into the world, which he delighted by his "wise wit." Most London dinners, he declared, evaporated in whispers to one's next neighbors. He never, however, spoke to his neighbor, but "fired" across the table. One day, however, he broke his rule, on hearing a lady, who sat next him say, in a sweet low voice, "No gravy, sir."—"Madam!" he cried, "I have all my life been looking for a person

who disliked gravy; let us swear immortal friendship." She look astonished, but took the oath, and kept it. "What better foundation for friendship," he asks, "than similarity of tastes?"

He gave an evening party once a week; when a profusion of wax-lights was his passion. He loved to see young people decked with natural flowers; he was, in fact, a blameless and benevolent Epicurean in everything; great indeed was the change from his former residence at Foston, which he used to say was twelve miles from a lemon. Charming as his parties at home must have been, they wanted the *bon-hommie* and simplicity of former days, and of the homely suppers in Orchard Street. Lord Dudley, Rogers, Moore, "Young Macaulay," as he was called for many years, formed now his society. Lord Dudley was then in the state which afterwards became insanity, and darkened completely a mind sad and peculiar from childhood. Bankes, in his "Journal," relates an anecdote of him about this time, when, as he says, "Dudley's mind was on the wane; but still his caustic humor would find vent through the cloud which was gradually overshadowing his masterly intellect." He was one day sitting in his room soliloquizing aloud; his favorite Newfoundland dog was at his side, and seemed to engross all his attention. A gentleman was present who was good-looking and good-natured, but not overburdened with sense. Lord Dudley at last, patting his dog's head, said, "Fido mio, they say dogs have no souls. Humph,

and still they say ——" (naming the gentleman present) "has a soul!" One day Lord Dudley met Mr. Allen, Lord Holland's librarian, and asked him to dine with him. Allen went. When asked to describe his dinner, he said, "There was no one there. Lord Dudley talked a little to his servant, and a great deal to his dog, but said not one word to me."

Innumerable are the witticisms related of Sydney Smith, when seated at a dinner table—having swallowed in life what he called a "Caspian Sea" of soup. Talking one day of Sir Charles Lyell's book, the subject of which was the phenomena which the earth might, at some future period, present to the geologists, "Let us imagine," he said, "an excavation on the site of St. Paul's; fancy a lecture by the Owen of his future era on the thigh-bone of a minor canon, or the tooth of a dean: the form, qualities, and tastes he would discover from them." "It is a great proof of shyness," he said, "to crumble your bread at dinner. Ah! I see," he said, turning to a young lady, "you're afraid of me: you crumble your bread. I do it when I sit by the Bishop of London, and with both hands when I sit by the Archbishop."

He gave a capital reproof to a lively young M. P. who was accompanying him after dinner to one of the solemn evening receptions at Lambeth Palace during the life of the late Archbishop of Canterbury. The M. P. had been calling him "Smith," though they had never met before that day. As the carriage stop-

ped at the Palace, Smith turned to him and said, "Now don't, my good fellow, don't call the Archbishop 'Howley.'"

Talking of fancy-balls—"Of course," he said, "if I went to one, I should go as a Dissenter." Of Macaulay, he said, "To take him out of literature and science, and to put him in the House of Commons, is like taking the chief physician out of London in a pestilence."

Nothing amused him so much as the want of perception of a joke. One hot day a Mrs. Jackson called on him, and spoke of the oppressive state of the weather. "Heat! it was dreadful," said Sydney; "I found I could do nothing for it but take off my flesh and sit in my bones."—"Take off your flesh and sit in your bones! Oh, Mr. Smith! how could you do that?" the lady cried. "Come and see next time, ma'am—nothing more easy." She went away, however, convinced that such a proceeding was very unorthodox. No wonder, with all his various acquirements, it should be said of him that no "dull dinners were ever remembered in his company."

A happy old age concluded his life, at once brilliant and useful. To the last he never considered his education as finished. His wit, a friend said, "was always fresh, always had the dew on it. He latterly got into what Lord Jeffrey called the vicious habit of water drinking. Wine, he said, destroyed his understanding. He even "forgot the number of the Muses, and thought

it was thirty-nine, of course." He agreed with Sir James Mackintosh that he had found the world more good and more foolish than he had thought when young. He took a cheerful view of all things; he thanked God for small as well as great things, even for tea. "I am glad," he used to say, "I was not born before tea." His domestic affections were strong, and were heartily reciprocated.

General society he divided into classes: "The noodles—very numerous and well known. The affliction woman—a valuable member of society, generally an ancient spinster in small circumstances, who packs up her bag and sets off in cases of illness or death, 'to comfort, flatter, fetch, and carry.' The up-takers—people who see from their fingers' ends and go through a room touching everything. The clearers—who begin at a dish and go on tasting and eating till it is finished. The sheep-walkers—who go on for ever on the beaten track. The lemon-squeezers of society—who act on you as a wet blanket; see a cloud in sunshine; the nails of the coffin in the ribbons of a bride; extinguish all hope; people, whose very look sets your teeth on an edge. The let-well-aloners, cousin-german to the noodles—yet a variety, and who are afraid to act, and think it safer to stand still. Then the washerwomen—very numerous! who always say, 'Well, if ever I put on my best bonnet, 'tis sure to rain,' etc.

"Besides this there is a very large class of people

always treading on your gouty foot, or talking in your deaf ear, or asking you to give them something with your lame hand," etc.

During the autumn of the year 1844, Sydney Smith felt the death-stroke approaching. "I am so weak, both in body and mind," he said, "that I believe if the knife were put into my hand, I should not have strength enough to stick it into a Dissenter." In October he became seriously ill. "Ah! Charles," he said to General Fox (when he was being kept very low), "I wish they would allow me even the wing of a roasted butterfly." He dreaded sorrowful faces around him; but confided to his old servant, Annie Kay—and to her alone—his sense of his danger.

Almost the last person Sydney Smith saw was his beloved brother Bobus, who followed him to the grave a fortnight after he had been laid in the tomb.

He lingered till the 22d of February, 1845. His son closed his eyes. His last act was, bestowing on a poverty-stricken clergyman a living.

He was buried at Kensal Green, where his eldest son, Douglas, had been interred.

It has been justly and beautifully said of Sydney Smith, that Christianity was not a dogma with him, but a practical and most beneficent rule of life.

As a clergyman, he was liberal, practical, staunch; as free from the latitudinarian principles of Hoadley, as

from the bigotry of Laud. His wit was the wit of a virtuous, a decorous man; it had pungency without venom; humor without indelicacy; and was copious without being tiresome.

George Bubb Dodington,

Lord Melcombe.

GEORGE BUBB DODINGTON, LORD MELCOMBE.

It would have been well for Lord Melcombe's memory, Horace Walpole remarks, "if his fame had been suffered to rest on the tradition of his wit and the evidence of his poetry." And in the present day, that desirable result has come to pass. We remember Bubb Dodington chiefly as the courtier whose person, houses, and furniture were replete with costly ostentation, so as to provoke the satire of Foote, who brought him on the stage under the name of Sir Thomas Lofty in "The Patron."

We recall him most as "*l'Amphytrion chez qui on dine;*" "My Lord of Melcombe," as Mallet says—

> "Whose soups and sauces duly season'd,
> Whose wit well tim'd and sense well reason'd,
> Give Burgundy a brighter stain,
> And add new flavor to champagne."

Who now cares much for the court intrigues which served Sir Robert Walpole and Bubb Dodington? Who now reads without disgust the annals of that famous quarrel between George II. and his son, during which each party devoutly wished the other

dead? Who minds whether the time-serving Bubb Dodington went over to Lord Bute or not? Who cares whether his hopes of political preferment were or were not gratified? Bubb Dodington was, in fact, the dinner-giving lordly poet, to whom even the saintly Young could write:—

"You give protection,—I a worthless strain."

Born in 1691, the accomplished courtier answered, till he had attained the age of twenty-nine, to the not very euphonious name of Bubb. Then a benevolent uncle with a large estate died, and left him, with his lands, the more exalted name of Dodington. He sprang, however, from an obscure family, who had settled in Dorchester; but that disadvantage, which, according to Lord Brougham's famous pamphlet, acts so fatally on a young man's advancement in English public life, was obviated, as most things are, by a great fortune.

Mr. Bubb had been educated at Oxford: at the age of twenty-four he was elected M. P. for Winchelsea; he was soon afterwards named Envoy at the Court of Spain, but returned home after his accession of wealth to provincial honors, and became Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset. Nay, poets began to worship him, and even pronounced him to be well born:—

"Descended from old British sires;
Great Dodington to kings allied;
My patron then, my laurels' pride."

It would be consolatory to find that it is only Welsted who thus profaned the Muse by this abject flattery, were it not recorded that Thomson dedicated to him his "Summer." The dedication was prompted by Lord Binning; and "Summer" was published in 1727 when Dodington was one of the Lords of the Treasury, as well as Clerk of the Pells in Ireland. It seemed, therefore, worth while for Thomson to pen such a passage as this:—"Your example, sir, has recommended poetry with the greatest grace to the example of those who are engag'd in the most active scenes of life; and this, though confessedly the least considerable of those qualities that dignify your character, must be particularly pleasing to *one* whose only hope of being introduced to your regard is thro' the recommendation of an art in which you are a master." Warton adding this tribute:—

> "To praise a Dodington, rash bard! forbear.
> What can thy weak and ill-tun'd voice avail,
> When on that theme both Young and Thomson fail?"

Yet even when midway in his career, Dodington, in the famous political caricature called "The Motion," is depicted as "the Spaniel," sitting between the Duke of Argyle's legs, whilst his grace is driving a coach at full speed to the Treasury, with a sword instead of a whip in his hand, with Lord Chesterfield as postilion, and Lord Cobham as a footman, holding on by the straps: even then the servile though pompous cha-

racter of this true man of the world was comprehended completely; and Bubb Dodington's characteristics never changed.

In his political life, Dodington was so selfish, obsequious, and versatile as to incur universal opprobrium; he had also another misfortune for a man of society,—he became fat and lethargic. "My brother Ned," Horace Walpole remarks, "says he is grown of less consequence, though more weight." And on another occasion, speaking of a majority in the House of Lords, he adds, "I do not count Dodington, who must now always be in the minority, for no majority will accept him."

Whilst, however, during the factious reign of George II., the town was declared, even by Horace, to be wondrous dull; operas unfrequented, plays not in fashion, and amours old as marriages, Bubb Dodington, with his wealth and profusion, contrived always to be in vogue as a host, while he was at a discount as a politician. Politics and literature are the high-roads in England to that much-craved-for distinction, an admittance into the great world; and Dodington united these passports in his own person: he was a poetaster, and wrote political pamphlets. The latter were published and admired: the poems were referred to as "very pretty love verses," by Lord Lyttelton, and were never published—and never ought to have been published, it is stated.

His *bon mots*, his sallies, his fortunes and places, and continual dangling at court, procured Bubo, as Pope styled him, one pre-eminence. His dinners at Hammersmith were the most *recherchés* in the metropolis. Every one remembers Brandenburgh House, when the hapless Caroline of Brunswick held her court there, and where her brave heart,—burdened probably with some sins, as well as with endless regrets,—broke at last. It had been the residence of the beautiful and famous Margravine of Anspach, whose loveliness in vain tempts us to believe her innocent, in despite of facts. Before those eras—the presence of the Margravine, whose infidelities were almost avowed, and the abiding of the queen, whose errors had, at all events, verged on the very confines of guilt—the house was owned by Dodington. There he gave dinners; there he gratified a passion for display which was puerile; there he indulged in eccentricities which almost implied insanity; there he concocted his schemes for court advancement; and there, later in life, he contributed some of the treasures of his wit to dramatic literature. "The Wishes," a comedy, by Bentley, was supposed to owe much of its point to the brilliant wit of Dodington.[1]

At Brandenburgh House, a nobler presence than that of Dodington still haunted the groves and alleys, for Prince Rupert had once owned it. When Dodington bought it, he gave it—in jest, we must presume—the name of La Trappe; and it was not called Brand-

[1] See Walpole's "Royal and Noble Authors."

enburgh House until the fair and frail Margravine came to live there.

Its gardens were long famous; and in the time of Dodington were the scene of revel. Thomas Bentley, the son of Richard Bentley, the celebrated critic, had written a play called "The Wishes;" and during the summer of 1761 it was acted at Drury Lane, and met with the especial approbation of George III., who sent the author, through Lord Bute, a present of two hundred guineas as a tribute to the good sentiments of the production.

This piece, which, in spite of its moral tendency, has died out, whilst plays of less virtuous character have lived, was rehearsed in the gardens of Brandenburgh House. Bubb Dodington associated much with those who give fame; but he courted amongst them also those who could revenge affronts by bitter ridicule. Among the actors and literati who were then sometimes at Brandenburgh House were Foote and Churchill; capital boon companions, but, as it proved, dangerous foes.

Endowed with imagination; with a mind enriched by classical and historical studies; possessed of a brilliant wit; Bubb Dodington was, nevertheless, in the sight of some men, ridiculous. Whilst the rehearsals of "The Wishes" went on, Foote was noting down all the peculiarities of the Lord of Brandenburgh House, with a view to bring them to account in his play of "The Patron." Lord Melcombe was an aristocratic

Dombey: stultified by his own self-complacency, he dared to exhibit his peculiarities before the English Aristophanes. It was an act of imprudence, for Foote had long before (in 1747) opened the little theatre of the Haymarket with a sort of monologue play, "The Diversions of the Morning," in which he convulsed his audience with the perfection of a mimicry never beheld before, and so wonderful, that even the persons of his models seemed to stand before the amazed spectators.

These entertainments, in which the contriver was at once the author and performer, have been admirably revived by Mathews and others; and in another line, by the lamented Albert Smith. The Westminster justices, furious and alarmed, opposed the daring performance, on which Foote changed the name of his piece, and called it, "Mr. Foote giving Tea to his Friends," himself still the sole actor, and changing with Proteus-like celerity from one to the other. Then came his "Auction of Pictures," and Sir Thomas de Veil, one of his enemies, the justices, was introduced. Orator Henley and Cock the auctioneer figured also; and year after year the town was enchanted by that which is most gratifying to a polite audience, the finished exhibition of faults and follies. One stern voice was raised in reprobation, that of Samuel Johnson: he, at all events, had a due horror of buffoons; but even he owned himself vanquished.

"The first time I was in Foote's company was at

Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased: and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him; but the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back in my chair, and fairly laugh it out. Sir, he was irresistible." Consoled by Foote's misfortunes and ultimate complicated misery for his lessened importance, Bubb Dodington still reigned, however, in the hearts of some learned votaries. Richard Bentley, the critic, compared him to Lord Halifax—

> "That Halifax, my Lord, as you do yet,
> Stood forth the friend of poetry and wit,
> Sought silent merit in the secret cell,
> And Heav'n, nay even man, repaid him well."

A more remorseless foe, however, than Foote appeared in the person of Charles Churchill, the wild and unclerical son of a poor curate of Westminster. Foote laughed Bubb Dodington down, but Churchill perpetuated the satire; for Churchill was wholly unscrupulous, and his faults had been reckless and desperate. Wholly unfit for a clergyman, he had taken orders, obtained a curacy in Wales at £30 a year—not being able to subsist, took to keeping a cider-cellar, became a sort of bankrupt, and, quitting Wales, succeeded to the curacy of his father, who had just died. Still famine haunted his home; Churchill took, there-

fore, to teaching young ladies to read and write, and conducted himself in the boarding-school where his duties lay, with wonderful propriety. He had married at seventeen; but even that step had not protected his morals: he fell into abject poverty. Lloyd, father of his friend Robert Lloyd, then second master of Westminster, made an arrangement with his creditors. Young Lloyd had published a poem called "The Actor;" Churchill, in imitation, now produced "The Rosciad," and Bubb Dodington was one whose ridiculous points were salient in those days of personality. "The Rosciad" had a signal success, which completed the ruin of its author: he became a man of the town, forsook the wife of his youth, and abandoned the clerical character. There are few sights more contemptible than that of a clergyman who has cast off his profession, or whose profession has cast him off. But Churchill's talents for a time kept him from utter destitution. Bubb Dodington may have been consoled by finding that he shared the fate of Dr. Johnson, who had spoken slightingly of Churchill's works, and who shone forth, therefore, in "The Ghost," a later poem, as Dr. Pomposo.

Richard Cumberland, the dramatist, drew a portrait of Lord Melcombe, which is said to have been taken from the life; but perhaps the most faithful delineation of Bubb Dodington's character was furnished by himself in his "Diary;" in which, as it has been well observed, he "unveiled the nakedness of his mind, and

displayed himself as a courtly compound of mean compliance and political prostitution." It may, in passing, be remarked, that few men figure well in an autobiography; and that Cumberland himself, proclaimed by Dr. Johnson to be a "learned, ingenious, accomplished gentleman," adding, "the want of company is an inconvenience, but Mr. Cumberland is a million:" in spite of this eulogium, Cumberland has betrayed in his own autobiography unbounded vanity, worldliness, and an undue estimation of his own perishable fame. After all, amusing as personalities must always be, neither the humors of Foote, the vigorous satire of Churchill, nor the careful limning of Cumberland, whilst they cannot be ranked among talents of the highest order, imply a sort of social treachery. The delicious little colloquy between Boswell and Johnson places low personal ridicule in its proper light.

Boswell.—"Foote has a great deal of humor." Johnson.—"Yes, sir." Boswell.—"He has a singular talent of exhibiting characters." Johnson.—"Sir, it is not a talent—it is a vice; it is what others abstain from. It is not comedy, which exhibits the character of a species—as that of a miser gathered from many misers—it is a farce, which exhibits individuals." Boswell.—"Did not he think of exhibiting you, sir?" Johnson.—"Sir, fear restrained him; he knew I would have broken his bones. I would have saved him the trouble of cutting off a leg; I would not have left him a leg to cut off."

Few annals exist of the private life of Bubb Dodington, but those few are discreditable.

Like most men of his time, and like many men of all times, Dodington was entangled by an unhappy and perplexing intrigue.

There was a certain "black woman," as Horace Walpole calls a Mrs. Strawbridge, whom Bubb Dodington admired. This handsome brunette lived in a corner house of Saville Row, in Piccadilly, where Dodington visited her. The result of their intimacy was his giving this lady a bond of ten thousand pounds to be paid if he married any one else. The real object of his affections was a Mrs. Behan, with whom he lived seventeen years, and whom, on the death of Mrs. Strawbridge, he eventually married.

Among Bubb Dodington's admirers and disciples was Paul Whitehead, a wild specimen of the poet, rake, satirist, dramatist, all in one; and what was quite in character, a Templar to boot. Paul—so named from being born on that saint's day—wrote one or two pieces which brought him an ephemeral fame, such as the "State Dunces," and the "Epistle to Dr. Thompson," "Manners," a satire, and the "Gymnasiad," a mock heroic poem, intended to ridicule the passion for boxing, then prevalent. Paul Whitehead, who died in 1774, was an infamous, but not, in the opinion of Walpole, a despicable poet, yet Churchill has consigned him to everlasting infamy as a reprobate, in these lines:—

"May I (can worse disgrace on manhood fall?)
Be born a Whitehead, and be baptized a Paul!"

Paul was not, however, worse than his satirist Churchill; and both of these wretched men were members of a society long the theme of horror and disgust, even after its existence had ceased to be remembered, except by a few old people. This was the "Hell-fire Club," held in appropriate orgies at Medmenham Abbey, Buckinghamshire. The profligate Sir Francis Dashwood, Wilkes, and Churchill were amongst its most prominent members.

With such associates, and living in a court where nothing but the basest passions reigned and the lowest arts prevailed, we are inclined to accord with the descendant of Bubb Dodington, the editor of his "Diary," Henry Penruddocke Wyndham, who declares that all Lord Melcombe's political conduct was "wholly directed by the base motives of vanity, selfishness, and avarice." Lord Melcombe seems to have been a man of the world of the very worst *calibre;* sensual, servile, and treacherous; ready, during the lifetime of his patron, Frederick, Prince of Wales, to go any lengths against the adverse party of the Pelhams, that Prince's political foes—eager, after the death of Frederick, to court those powerful men with fawning servility.

The famous "Diary" of Bubb Dodington supplies the information from which these conclusions have been

drawn. Horace Walpole, who knew Dodington well, describes how he read with avidity the "Diary," which was published in 1784.

"A nephew of Lord Melcombe's heirs has published that lord's 'Diary.' Indeed it commences in 1749, and I grieve it was not dated twenty years later. However, it deals in topics that are twenty times more familiar and fresh to my memory than any passage that has happened within these six months. I wish I could convey it to you. Though drawn by his own hand, and certainly meant to flatter himself, it is a truer portrait than any of his hirelings would have given. Never was such a composition of vanity, versatility, and servility. In short, there is but one feature wanting in it, his wit, of which in the whole book there are not three sallies."

The editor of this "Diary" remarks, "that he will no doubt be considered a very extraordinary editor; the practice of whom has generally been to prefer flattery to truth, and partiality to justice." To understand, not the flattery which his contemporaries heaped upon Bubb Dodington, but the opprobrium with which they loaded his memory—to comprehend not his merits but his demerits—it is necessary to take a brief survey of his political life from the commencement. He began life, as we have seen, as a servile adherent of Sir Robert Walpole. A political epistle to the Minister was the prelude to a temporary alliance only, for in 1737, Bubb went over to the adverse party of Leicester

House, and espoused the cause of Frederick, Prince of Wales, against his royal father. He was therefore dismissed from the Treasury. When Sir Robert fell, Bubb expected to rise, but his expectations of preferment were not realized. He attacked the new Administration forthwith, and succeeded so far in becoming important that he was made Treasurer of the Navy; a post which he resigned in 1749, and which he held again in 1755, but which he lost the next year. On the accession of George III., he was not ashamed to appear altogether in a new character, as the friend of Lord Bute; he was, therefore, advanced to the peerage by the title of Baron of Melcombe Regis, in 1761. The honor was enjoyed for one short year only; and on the 28th of July, 1762, Bubb Dodington expired. Horace Walpole, in his "Royal and Noble Authors," complains that "Dodington's 'Diary' was mangled, in compliment, before it was imparted to the public." We cannot therefore judge of what the "Diary" was before, as the editor avows that every anecdote was cut out, and all the little gossip so illustrative of character and manners, which would have brightened its dull pages, fell beneath the power of a merciless pair of scissors. Mr. Penruddocke Wyndham conceives, however, that he was only doing justice to society in these suppressions. "It would," he says, "be *no* entertainment to the reader to be informed who daily dined with his lordship, or whom he daily met at the table of other people."

Posterity thinks differently: a knowledge of a man's associates forms the best commentary on his life; and there is much reason to rejoice that all biographers are not like Mr. Penruddocke Wyndham. Bubb Dodington, more especially, was a man of society: inferior as a literary man, contemptible as a politician, it was only at the head of his table that he was agreeable and brilliant. He was, in fact, a man who had no domestic life: a courtier, like Lord Hervey, but without Lord Hervey's consistency. He was, in truth, a type of that era in England: vulgar in aims; dissolute in conduct; ostentatious, vain-glorious—of a low, ephemeral ambition; but at the same time talented, acute, and lavish to the lettered. The public is now the patron of the gifted. What writer cares for individual opinion, except as it tends to sweep up the gross amount of public blame or censure? What publisher will consent to undertake a work because some lord or lady recommended it to his notice? The reviewer is greater in the commonwealth of letters than the man of rank.

But in these days it was otherwise; and they who, in the necessities of the times, did what they could to advance the interests of the *belles lettres*, deserve not to be forgotten.

It is with a feeling of sickness that we open the pages of this great Wit's "Diary," and attempt to peruse the sentences in which the most grasping selfishness is displayed. We follow him to Leicester

House—that ancient tenement—(wherefore pulled down, except to erect on its former site the narrowest of streets, does not appear): that former home of the Sydneys had not always been polluted by the dissolute, heartless *clique* who composed the court of Frederick, Prince of Wales. Its chambers had once been traversed by Henry Sydney, by Algernon, his brother. It was their *home*—their father, Robert Sydney, Earl of Leicester, having lived there. The lovely Dorothy Sydney, Waller's Saccharissa, once, in all purity and grace, had danced in that gallery where the vulgar, brazen Lady Middlesex, and her compliant lord, afterwards flattered the weakest of princes, Frederick. In old times Leicester House had stood on Lammas land—land in the spirit of the old charities, open to the poor after Lammas-tide; and even "the Right Hon. the Earl of Leicester"—as an old document hath it—was obliged, if *he* chose to turn out his cows or horses on that appropriated land, to pay a rent for it to the overseers of St. Martin's parish, then really "in the fields." And here this nobleman not only dwelt in all state himself, but let or lent his house to persons whose memory seems to hallow even Leicester Fields. Elizabeth of Bohemia, after what was to her indeed "life's fitful fever," died at Leicester House. It became then, temporarily, the abode of ambassadors. Colbert, in the times of Charles II., occupied the place; Prince Eugène, in 1712, held his residence here; and the rough soldier, famous for all absence of tact—

brave, loyal-hearted, and coarse—lingered at Leicester House in hopes of obstructing the peace between England and France.

All that was good and great fled for ever from Leicester House at the instant that George II., when Prince of Wales, was driven by his royal father from St. James's, and took up his abode in it until the death of George I. The once honored home of the Sydneys henceforth becomes loathsome in a moral sense. Here William, Duke of Cumberland—the hero, as court flatterers called him—the butcher, as the poor Jacobite designated him—of Culloden, first saw the light. Peace and respectability then dignified the old house for ever. Prince Frederick was its next inmate: here the Princess of Wales, the mother of George III., had her lyings-in, and her royal husband held his public tables; and at these and in every assembly, as well as in private, one figure is conspicuous.

Grace Boyle—for she unworthily bore that great name—was the daughter and heiress of Richard, Viscount Shannon. She married Lord Middlesex, bringing him a fortune of thirty thousand pounds. Short, plain, "very yellow," as her contemporaries affirm, with a head full of Greek and Latin, and devoted to music and painting, it seems strange that Frederick should have been attracted to one far inferior to his own princess both in mind and person. But so it was, for in those days every man liked his neighbor's wife better than his own. Imitating the

forbearance of her royal mother-in-law, the princess tolerated such of her husband's mistresses as did not interfere in politics: Lady Middlesex was the "my good Mrs. Howard" of Leicester House. She was made Mistress of the Robes: her favor soon "grew," as the shrewd Horace remarks, "to be rather more than Platonic." She lived with the royal pair constantly, and sat up till five o'clock in the morning at their suppers; and Lord Middlesex saw and submitted to all that was going on with the loyalty and patience of a *Georgian* courtier. Lady Middlesex was a docile politician, and on that account, retained her position probably long after she had lost her influence.

Her name appears constantly in the "Diary," out of which everything amusing has been carefully expunged.

"Lady Middlesex, Lord Bathurst, Mr. Breton, and I waited on their Royal Highnesses to Spitalfields, to see the manufacture of silk." In the afternoon off went the same party to Norwood Forest, in private coaches, to see a "settlement of gypsies." Then, returning, went to find out Bettesworth, the conjurer; but not discovering him, went in search of the little Dutchman. Were disappointed in that; but "concluded," relates Bubb Dodington, "the peculiarities of this day by supping with Mrs. Cannon, the princess's *midwife*."

All these elegant modes of passing the time were not only for the sake of Lady Middlesex, but, it was said,

of her friend, Mrs. Granville, one of the Maids of Honor, daughter of the first Lord Lansdown, the poet. This young lady, Eliza Granville, was scarcely pretty: a fair, red-haired girl.

All this thoughtless, if not culpable, gallantry was abruptly checked by the rude hand of death. During the month of March, Frederick was attacked with illness, having caught cold. Very little apprehension was expressed at first, but, about eleven days after his first attack, he expired. Half an hour before his death, he had asked to see some friends, and had called for coffee and bread and butter: a fit of coughing came on, and he died instantly from suffocation. An abscess, which had been forming in his side, had burst; nevertheless, his two physicians, Wilmot and Lee, "knew nothing of his distemper." According to Lord Melcombe, who thus refers to their blunders, "they declared, half an hour before his death, that his pulse was like a man's in perfect health. They either would not see or did not know the consequences of the black thrush, which appeared in his mouth, and quite down in his throat. Their ignorance, or their knowledge of his disorder, renders them equally inexcusable for not calling in other assistance."

The consternation in the prince's household was great, not for his life, but for the confusion into which politics were thrown by his death. After his relapse, and until just before his death, the princess never suffered any English, man or woman, above the degree of

valet-de-chambre to see him; nor did she herself see any one of her household until absolutely necessary. After the death of his eldest born, George II. vented his diabolical jealousy upon the cold remains of one thus cut off in the prime of life. The funeral was ordered to be on the model of that of Charles II., but private counter-orders were issued to reduce the ceremonial to the smallest degree of respect that could be paid.

On the 13th of April, 1751, the body of the prince was entombed in Henry VII.'s Chapel. Except the lords appointed to hold the pall, and attend the chief mourner, when the attendants were called over in their ranks, there was not a *single* English lord, not *one* bishop, and only one Irish lord (Lord Limerick), and three sons of peers. Sir John Rushout and Dodington were the only privy counsellors who followed. It rained heavily, but no covering was provided for the procession. The service was performed without organ or anthem. "Thus," observes Bubb Dodington, "ended this sad day."

Although the prince left a brother and sisters, the Duke of Somerset acted as chief mourner. The king hailed the event of the prince's death as a relief, which was to render happy his remaining days; and Bubb Dodington hastened, in a few months, to offer to the Pelhams "his friendship and attachment." His attendance at court was resumed, although George II. could not endure him: and the old Walpolians,

nicknamed the Black-tan, were also very averse to him.

Such were Bubb Dodington's *actions*. His expressions, on occasion of the prince's death, were in a very different tone.

"We have lost," he wrote to Sir Horace Mann, "the delight and ornament of the age he lived in,—the expectations of the public: in this light I have lost more than any subject in England; but this is light,—public advantages confined to myself do not, ought not, to weigh with me. But we have lost the refuge of private distress—the balm of the afflicted heart, the shelter of the miserable against the fury of private adversity; the arts, the graces, the anguish, the misfortunes of society, have lost their patron and their remedy.

"I have lost my companion—my protector—the friend that loved me, that condescended to hear, to communicate, to share in all the pleasures and pains of the human heart: where the social affections and emotions of the mind only presided without regard to the infinite disproportion of my rank and condition. This is a wound that cannot, ought not to heal. If I pretend to fortitude here, I should be infamous—a monster of ingratitude—and unworthy of all consolation, if I was not inconsolable."

"Thank you," writes the shrewd Horace Walpole, addressing Sir Horace Mann, "for the transcript from *Bubb de Tristibus*. I will keep your secret, though I

am persuaded that a man who had composed such a funeral oration on his master had himself fully intended that its flowers should not bloom and wither in obscurity."

Well might George II. seeing him go to court say: "I see Dodington here sometimes: what does he come for?"

It was, however, clearly seen what he went for, when, in 1753, two years after the death of "his benefactor," Dodington humbly offered His Majesty his services in the house, and "five members," for the rest of his life, if His Majesty would give Mr. Pelham leave to employ him for His Majesty's service. Nevertheless he continued to advise with the Princess of Wales, and to drop into her house as if it had been a sister's house—sitting on a stool near the fireside, and listening to her accounts of her children.

In the midst of these intrigues for favor on the part of Dodington, Mr. Pelham died, and was succeeded by his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, the issue of whose administration is well known.

In 1760 death again befriended the now veteran wit, beau, and politician. George II. died; and the intimacy which Dodington had always taken care to preserve between himself and the Princess of Wales, ended advantageously for him; and he instantly, in spite of all his former professions to Pelham, joined hand and heart with that minister, from whom he obtained a peerage. This, as we have seen, was not long

enjoyed. Lord Melcombe, as this able, intriguing man was now styled, died on the 28th of July, 1762; and with him terminated the short-lived distinction for which he had sacrificed even a decent pretext of principle and consistency.

So general has been the contempt felt for his character, that it seems almost needless to assert that Bubb Dodington was eminently to be despised. Nothing much more severe can be said of him than the remarks of Horace Walpole upon his "Diary;" in which he observes that Dodington records little but what is to his own disgrace; as if he thought that the world would forgive his inconsistencies as readily as he forgave himself. "Had he adopted," Horace well observes, "the French title '*Confessions*,' it would have seemed to imply some kind of penitence."

But vain-glory engrossed him: "He was determined to raise an altar to himself, and for want of burnt offerings, lighted the pyre, like a great author (Rousseau), with his own character."

It was said by the same acute observer, both of Lord Hervey and of Bubb Dodington, that "they were the only two persons he ever knew that were always aiming at wit and never finding it." And here, it seems, most that can be testified in praise of a heartless, clever man, must be summed up.

Lord Melcombe's property, with the exception of a few legacies, devolved upon his cousin Thomas Wyndham, of Hammersmith, by whom his Lordship's papers,

letters, and poems, were bequeathed to Henry Penruddocke Wyndham, with an injunction, that only such as "might do honor to his memory should be made public."

After this, in addition to the true saying, Defend us from our friends, one may exclaim, "Defend us from our executors and editors."

THE END.

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